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RUSSIAN FLASHLIGHTS

MR. JAAKOFF PRELOOKER [*Frontispiece*

RUSSIAN FLASHLIGHTS

BY

JAAKOFF PRELOOKER

AUTHOR OF
"UNDER THE CZAR AND QUEEN VICTORIA,"
"HEROES AND HEROINES OF RUSSIA,"
ETC.

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR
TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN BY
HELENA FRANK

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WITH 16 PORTRAITS AND OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE stories and studies forming this volume have already appeared in various periodicals and other publications, but have mostly been revised for the present occasion. The story "Trishka and Vasuitka" originally appeared in the *Sunday Magazine;* "Count Stroganoff" in the *Fortnightly Review;* "Sensational Prison Escapes" in the *Wide World Magazine;* "Gershuni's Feat" in the *Strand Magazine;* "Traitor or Martyr?" in *The Anglo-Russian;* "Creation in Revolt" *ibid.;* "The Kidnapped Prince and Princess" in the book *Heroes and Heroines of Russia,* published by Messrs. Simpkin & Marshall; "The Lady Cavalier" in *The Anglo-Russian;* "Semite and Slav" *ibid.;* and, finally, "The Wonderful Buddhist Monk" in the book *Rabbi Shalom on the Shores of the Black Sea* (Simpkin, Marshall & Co.), in which the essay appeared in a slightly different version. A few passages in the Biographical Introduction are quoted from *Under the Czar and Queen Victoria: The Experience of a Russian Reformer,* published by Messrs. James Nisbet & Co. To the publishers of all the above-mentioned periodicals and books we

are indebted for their courtesy. We are especially indebted to Miss Helena Frank for her valuable help in the translation from the Italian and compilation of the introductory biographical sketch. The stories and studies speak for themselves, each of them throwing a "flashlight" on some peculiarly Russian, or general, political, religious or social problem.

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RUSSIAN FLASHLIGHTS

JAAKOFF PRELOOKER

By HELENA FRANK

It is not infrequently the case that the personal life story of a talented writer of stories is at least as interesting and instructive as his literary productions.

It is undoubtedly so in the case of Mr. Jaakoff Prelooker, whose best stories and studies are here collected and presented to the public in book form for the first time. For the rest, to call the narratives in this volume simply "stories" is scarcely correct, for, as the reader will have plenty of opportunities to convince himself, our Author certainly possesses the uncommon gift of writing stories, which are in reality most serious and scholarly religious, political, or philosophical essays, and on the contrary, composing essays and studies which read like stories. It may be said indeed that, as in a grand panorama, so in the stories of our Author real facts form their foundations, which emerge imperceptibly from the background into the superstructures of his imagination, with the result that the reader beholds one realistic harmonious whole and is unable to discern the line of demarcation between fact and fiction.

Of course this observation does not refer to his purely historical and biographical sketches, in which there is absolutely no element of romance to veil the real truth.

Our Author, however, is not a man of letters only, though even as such he has the rare distinction of writing and publishing his works in four languages. He is a man of deeds and energetic action as well, founder of a religious reform movement amongst his own race, a voluntary exile from his native country for conscience' sake, a powerful and fascinating popular lecturer, addressing his audiences in five languages, founder and editor in England during the last fourteen years of the vigorous and unique monthly, *The Anglo-Russian*, and last, but not least, an enthusiastic, active supporter, with pen and purse, of the cause of Justice to Woman from his early youth.

It is presumed, therefore, that a brief sketch of the career of our Author, both in the country of his birth and in that of his adoption, will prove instructive and inspiring, and of special interest to the readers of this volume. And here it must be stated that Mr. Prelooker's life-story has already been told twice, first in an English publication and then in an Italian. The first was issued in 1895 by Messrs. James Nisbet & Co., entitled *Under the Czar and Queen Victoria. The Experiences of a Russian Reformer.* This book, now practically out of print, contains Mr. Prelooker's own account of the "New Israel" movement originated by him in Russia, of his work there amongst Jews and Christians, and of his conflicts "as a schoolmaster, preacher, writer and Russian subject generally with the Government, Priesthood, Press Censorship, etc." The volume evoked at the time much enthusiastic interest and comment in the British Press, the *Daily Chronicle* recommending the narrative as even more readable than the novels of Count Tolstoy, and the late W. E. Gladstone honouring the Author with a personal message expressive of appreciation and sympathy.

The Italian publication appeared in 1904 from the pen of Dr. S. Venuti, and forms a part of the *Galleria*

Biographica Internazionale, published in Rome under the direction of Prof. P. C. Teisser under the general title of "I Nostri Contemporanei" (Our Contemporaries), a work recommended by the Italian Ministry of Public Instruction for its educational value, for which it has also received the Grand Diploma at the International Exhibition of Progress in Brussels, 1903.

It is this Italian publication chiefly, supplemented by notes from the Author's own diary, that has been utilized for the following biographical sketch, which, whilst portraying the personality of the Author, will certainly be helpful for a better understanding of his works, so striking by their originality of thought and masterful literary style, especially remarkable in one who only in middle age started to learn our none too easy Anglo-Saxon tongue.

Jaakoff Prelooker was born in 1860 in the town of Pinsk, Western Russia, under the roof of his paternal grandfather, with whom his parents lived. The grandfather was a celebrated Rabbi of the picturesque old-fashioned type, traits of whose patriarchal character Prelooker gives us in the hero of his remarkable book *Rabbi Shalom on the Shores of the Black Sea*, published in English. At the age of four Jaakoff was sent to school to learn the Hebrew of the Old Testament, the boys having to sit closely at their task from early morning till evening, recreation and amusements being unknown and unheard of at these schools. At six he was passed on to the study of that hair-splitting code of religious and civil laws famous as the "Babylonian Talmud," and early in his teens he entered the Rabbinical Seminary at Slonim. By a well-meaning order of the Government the authorities of the seminary had to send a certain number of the students to the local Government school to learn the Russian language, arithmetic, and some geography and history. Such students, in spite of the compulsory nature of their

attendance at the Government School, were held in great contempt by the other students as learning godless Christian sciences. Jaakoff, however, athirst for general knowledge and irresistibly attracted by the mysterious Russian lesson books, was about to offer himself quite voluntarily as a pupil of the Government School, when his parents, alarmed at such impious intentions, removed him to another Rabbinical Seminary at Mir. Here, however, the boy began to learn Russian clandestinely with such occasional assistance as he could get from any one versed in that forbidden language. This sinful occupation was soon discovered, and after a subsequent period of home life in disgrace, Jaakoff finally succeeded in amassing from sympathetic friends the large fortune of five roubles, or, say, ten shillings, with which sum he started upon an educational career of his own choice by making a five days' journey to the town of Zhitomir. Here a Government College of Preceptors offered him some hope of passing the examinations that would qualify him for a Government Scholarship. Sure enough his fondest dreams were soon realized, and during four years, free from any care, he devoted himself with the utmost zeal to various studies, using even the spare minutes between the classes for the study of German and the reading of English and French authors in Russian translations.

Of the peculiar life at this Government College, of the hard discipline, of the utter neglect of the students' health and very lives, of their nocturnal romantic escapades, and secret readings of revolutionary literature in the class-rooms and dormitories under the very eyes of vigilant inspectors, readings organized and conducted by himself, Prelooker gives us vivid descriptions in his book *The Experiences of a Russian Reformer* mentioned above. Here suffice it to state that at the beginning of his College days at Zhitomir Jaakoff for the first time ventured to read the New Testament,

which, as he believed from his early childhood, was teaching Christians to persecute and even kill Jews.

When he came to the Sermon on the Mount and found that the essence of Christ's teaching was love, forgiveness and the brotherhood of man, he could hardly believe his eyes. From that moment he continued to study the Gospels in all earnestness, also the general history of Christianity.

Gradually, though dimly, the idea dawned upon him of the necessity of preaching a reconciliation between Jew and Christian, an idea which in later years with the further studies of Mohammedanism, Brahminism, Buddhism, and other religions, ripened into a conception of the oneness of the origin and ultimate aim of all religious creeds. How this conception was crystallized in our reformer's own mind and how originally attractively and poetically he presents it to others, the reader will judge for himself from one of the stories in this book, viz. *The Wonderful Buddhist Monk, and Ways to Shadai-Adonai.*

In the summer of 1880 Prelooker passed his final examinations, received his schoolmaster's certificate, and shortly after was appointed assistant master of the Second Government School for Jews at Odessa.

He was then twenty years old, full of energy, enterprise and enthusiasm to do something great, something that would benefit his own brethren and humanity at large. With the zeal of an apostle and the naïve faith of youth in the speedy and easy realization of lofty ideals, he lost no time in entering into endless heated discussions with his orthodox co-religionists, with the usual result that whilst the majority of them turned away from him with hatred and contempt, as from a rank heretic, a few more amenable to reason and logic soon became converted to his views and fondly attached to their teacher personally. This little group, consisting mostly of poor working men's families, soon formed

themselves into what became generally known as the "New Israel Brotherhood," with young Prelooker as their founder and leader.

Encouraged by the devotion of his followers and their enthusiasm for the new movement, he decided to give it publicity through the medium of the local daily paper, the *Odessa Listok*. The Christian editor of that paper, Mr. Adam Bialovesky, several times imprisoned and exiled for his liberal political views, accompanied Prelooker's communication with a warm editorial leader, praising the reformers and inviting all progressive Jews to give them every support. This memorable event, marking indeed, as we shall presently see, a turning-point in Russian Jewry and finding a sympathetic echo even in Russian Christian Sectarianism, took place on the 29th of January 1882, and produced at once upon the gloomy skies of Jewish orthodoxy the effect of a sudden thunderbolt. Wild rumours spread the same day amongst the numerous Jewish population, many being under the impression that the Government was ordering their forcible baptism into the Russian Church. The confusion and agitation were immense, especially in the synagogues, where the Jews assemble three times daily for the fixed prayers and where they remain for the discussion of the topics of the day. And no wonder that Jewish orthodox fanaticism was raised to its highest pitch, for though the Government had absolutely nothing to do with the "New Israel" movement, still, the latter strove to shake the very foundations of the Synagogue, which had kept the Jewish race together during centuries and for which the Jews had undergone the cruelest persecutions and martyrdom. The reformers could hardly have expected to raise a less furious outcry, seeing that they calmly put aside the divine authority of the Talmud, declared that Circumcision should be of the spirit only, that what the Christian might eat was clean enough for the Jew, that the Sab-

bath might as well, and even better, be kept on Sunday, that a church was as holy as a synagogue, and lastly, the most sinful thing of all, that Jews might marry Christians!

The persecutions against Prelooker began by parents withdrawing their children from the school in which he was teacher, then by threatening letters to the editor and publisher of the *Odessa Listok*, himself a born Christian, then again by public petitions and deputations to the chief educational authorities demanding Prelooker's dismissal from his post. In fact, fanatical bands were formed with the object of wreaking vengeance upon the originator of the heresy, and some New Israelites or simply sympathizers who ventured to defend openly the reform movement were cruelly attacked with great physical violence. Prelooker himself could not venture for some time to appear in the streets or to continue his duties at the school. Worst of all, so violent and bitter was the general commotion among the local Jews that the adherents of the new faith failed to maintain the courage of their convictions, and the "New Israel" community melted like snow, at least outwardly, before the wrath of the Synagogue. Prelooker's parents and grandfather were so stricken with grief that Rabbi Abraham, in his first despairing moments, actually prayed to God for the death of his apostate grandson, who covered with shame his name and that of his ancestors revered through generations.

Thus persecuted by bitter and fanatical opponents, and abandoned by his own followers, Jaakoff was in despair, not knowing what to do. But, "strange to say" (he writes in *The Experiences of a Russian Reformer*), "a pearl from that very Talmud against which I had just declared war, came into my mind and decided my action: 'Where there are no *men*, try thou to be *the* man.'" There might be no "New Israel" community for the time being, but at least there should be one New

Israelite apostle and preacher of the new idea. And so it was that "after days and nights of sad meditation" our reformer resolved to go on with the work by all means. The question was—how and by what means? The result of the numerous petitions to the authorities was that Prelooker had temporarily to absent himself from his post until his heresy was authoritatively and officially confirmed by the local Crown Rabbi, a post at the time occupied by an enlightened German Jew with a University degree, Dr. Schwabacher, himself of liberal and reform tendencies and sympathies. He somehow managed to procrastinate his reply, thus giving time for the first passionate outburst to calm down. At last he couched his official reply in such a way as to evade accusing Prelooker of definitely teaching heresy. The latter was then restored to the school, and only dispensed from giving lessons in religion. But New Israel meetings were out of the question, not a Jew would have attended. Besides, the whole movement having received such publicity, the eye of the police was now on its leader, and no meetings could be held without official permission. This, however, the local police could not give on its own authority, as any new heretical teaching is in Russia a grave religious, as well as political, offence, and only the Central Imperial Government can deal with such cases and instruct the local authorities whether to suppress or to tolerate the new movement. Prelooker then decided first of all to write a book on the subject, fully explaining his views, also to go personally to St. Petersburg to try and secure at least the non-interference of the Government in the movement.

In July 1882 the new book was ready. It was entitled *Hebrew Reformers. New Israel and the Spiritual Biblical Brotherhood* (the latter being a reform community which originated simultaneously in Elizabethgrad). With the precious MSS. in his bag Prelooker

then left for St. Petersburg. It was then, as it still continues to be, the treacherous policy of the Russian Government to create and foster anti-Semitic feelings, and thus to divert public opinion by giving prominence to the Jewish question and making the Jews the scapegoat of all Russian miseries and iniquities. It suited this policy very well to countenance any dissension amongst the Jews themselves, so that Jewish intolerance and fanaticism might come out and afford some justification for repressive measures. Prelooker understood this policy perfectly well, but what was to be done? The Minister of the Interior, and the late Prince Kantakuzen-Speransky, then Director of the Department of Foreign Creeds, received him very kindly and promised that his propaganda would not be interfered with. And here is a characteristic attitude towards the Russian Government, whose good acts even are looked upon with suspicion. "When I received this official assurance of good-will," says Prelooker, "I felt disgusted, and for a moment I wished the Government had rather opposed me in my work!"

Meanwhile, in Prelooker's absence from Odessa, the Jewish agitation against him was renewed with increased bitterness, his opponents insisting that he should be dismissed from the school altogether, though he no longer gave religious lessons there. Petitions to that effect were again sent to the Curator of the Odessa Educational Circuit, who forwarded them this time to the Town Council, asking it to lay the matter before the "Assembly of one hundred Jewish Delegates," an institution which then existed in Odessa in connection with the Town Council for the management of specifically Jewish affairs. On the 29th of September 1882 this modern Sanhedrin met, thirty-seven delegates being present. The president, Mr. Khari, a member of the Town Council, pointed out that as the Jews themselves had suffered and are suffering so much from religious

intolerance, it only became them not to show the same spirit towards one of their own brethren who differs from them religiously. These wise words were opposed by a delegate, who said that if a heretic was found in a Government Christian School he would not only be dismissed, but even sent to a monastery or to Siberia. The bad example had the greater effect, and by a vote of twenty-five against twelve Prelooker was pronounced a heretic and his position in a Jewish School declared inconsistent with its security and usefulness. This official act of the Odessa Jewish Assembly amounted virtually to the excommunication of Prelooker from the fold of the Synagogue, an excommunication probably the only one on record in the nineteenth century, and perhaps even since the days of Uriel Acosta, the famous heretic in the beginning of the seventeenth century, who was made the hero of the well-known German drama of the same name by Carl Gutzkow, a classical play frequently reproduced on the Continent. It is characteristic of the autocratic methods of Russian officials, that whilst the Christian Curator of the Odessa Educational Circuit, not considering himself competent to judge Judaic theological questions, referred Prelooker's case to the judgment of the official representatives of the Jewish Community with the evident intention of abiding by their decision, now that this decision was not in accordance with his personal feelings on the subject, he simply defied it and resolved that no case was made out for the removal of the heretical schoolmaster!

In reply to the verdict of the Jewish Assembly Prelooker issued a pamphlet, *To my Persecutors*, in which he in fiery eloquence appealed to the masses of his brethren to open their eyes and follow the new path of reform and brotherhood with the Gentiles. This appeal won for the cause and the reformer personally many sympathizers, especially among the young generation, but something like a real revolution of thought followed

shortly after the appearance of the above-mentioned book, *Hebrew Reformers*. This publication was received by the whole Christian Press with the highest appreciation possible.

The organs of the Jewish Press, which only a few months before heaped ridicule and contempt upon "New Israel" and encouraged the Odessa crusade against the originator, now took up a different attitude, and half-heartedly expressed their consent to some of the reforms, paying even homage to the sincerity and patriotism of the author. The strangest thing of all was that, as the book appeared under the pseudonym of "Emanuel ben Zion" (meaning in Hebrew "God is with us. A son of Zion"), nobody believed that Prelooker, only a young man of twenty-two, had anything to do with the authorship of this scholarly work, written with literary skill and manifesting a versatility of knowledge and statesmanlike judgment of a riper age. Still, his credit rose at once tremendously. Many began to seek his acquaintance, and from all parts of Russia, Finland, Caucasus, Siberia, and other places, came friendly letters of inquiry and encouragement from representatives of Nonconformist bodies and various secret sects, as well as from some of the Established Church. As the police were instructed not to interfere with the "New Israel" propaganda, and look, as the Russian saying goes, "skvoz paltsi" ("through the fingers") on the private meetings of the heretics, though they were not officially legalized, and as Jewish public opinion had undergone such a marvellous sudden change for the better since the publication of the above-mentioned book, the prospects in the future were very bright indeed, and our reformer threw himself into his work with all the disinterestedness, enthusiasm and rosy hopes of early youth, and with all the energy, resourcefulneses, and practical common sense which combine so favourably with the idealism of his individual character.

What effect the "New Israel" propaganda began to produce upon Russian Christians may be judged from the following remarkable words uttered in conversation with Prelooker by a liberal-minded priest of the Established Church after he had read the book of "New Israel"—

"You Jews in one respect are happier than we Christians. You are allowed to attack the evils and abuses of the Synagogue, and undisturbed to agitate for a revival and reformation, while we must keep silent, and dare not even allude to the iniquities and degradation of our so-called Holy Orthodox Church. Go on, brother; may God bless your work! The light you shed on one dark corner will not fail to throw a strong reflection in other quarters. The sounds of your attack on the idols of the Talmud of Israel will be echoed in many hearts of our Christian brethren, who are equally but helplessly opposed to the idols and the Talmud of the Greek Church. Intoxicated by their persecutions of your people, in order to please the brutal instincts of a demoralized and starving populace, and thus to maintain their own position and gratify their lust of power, the enemy will not see that the seeds you are now sowing will, in the long run, bear fruits disastrous to themselves."

These wise words of the enlightened priest proved indeed prophetic, except his belief that "the enemy will not see" the fruits the "New Israel" movement was bound to bear in various directions. Alas! it did not take the enemy very long to realize his mistake in fostering a propaganda disastrous to himself, and accordingly he did not fail to change his attitude towards it, though not before the seed sown had already germinated and taken deep roots in many directions.

Of the subsequent indefatigable activities during the next eight years of our reformer as an organizer, preacher, writer and schoolmaster withal, of his secret

relations with the Molocan and Stundist Dissenters, his visits to a friend in prison, his own arrest with an Englishman in a village, of the difficulties of the work amongst the peasantry, of his journey to Germany and Austria; of the beginning of Government persecutions and his perpetual disheartening struggles with the censorship, police, school authorities, even with the *dvornik* (the house-porter) who acts as a Government spy; of the touching devotion of his followers, and of many other stirring and romantic episodes Prelooker himself gives us spirited descriptions in his book, *The Experiences of a Russian Reformer*. As long as there was any possibility of continuing the work he did so, no matter at what cost and sacrifice to himself. But in 1887 the "New Israel" meetings were forbidden altogether, even in private houses, and this meant a greater watchfulness of his movements by the police. Next his intended lectures on "The Comparative Position of Woman in Judaism, Christianity, Mohammedanism, Brahmanism, and Buddhism," a cherished work for which he had studied exhaustively during several years, and which was quite free of any political tendencies, were too mercilessly and senselessly forbidden. Prelooker, then, could stand it no longer, and seeing that his career was practically closed in Russia and fearing even greater visitations by the authorities, he finally made up his mind to leave Russia altogether for a country where he could find full scope for his superabundant energies.

As characteristic of the man and somewhat flattering to our English *amour propre*, the following passages are quoted, showing the psychological moment of Prelooker's decision to leave his native country, also to which of all countries he lifted up his eyes as "unto the hills from whence cometh my help."

"When the police officer," he writes, "who brought me back the interdicted manuscripts of my lectures left

my room, I stood for some time stupefied and bewildered; then wild plans began to creep up and rage in my mind, and I regained my equanimity, when, as if moved by an inspiration, I shouted loudly to myself, 'They have interdicted my lectures on the banks of the Neva, but I will deliver them on the free banks of the Thames!'

"This was in March 1891, and I have since carried out my decision, not, I venture to think, without the sincere appreciation of the British public and Press.

"The plan of breaking up my whole career and leaving Russia altogether for a country where people, language, customs, etc., were utterly foreign to me, was certainly a very bold one, and my family and friends did their best to warn me and oppose my risky enterprise. For myself I felt sure that I should not live long in Russia. I should either openly revolt, go mad and die in some prison or Siberian mines, or, if submissive, inactive and idle, should die from moral depression, which had already considerably undermined my health.

"There is a little creature in God's wide world which cannot stand still for a moment, which, when captured by man, must be supplied in its cage with a wheel, to run on and turn it incessantly, otherwise its blood would remain stagnant, and it would die before its time. My nature, may I say so, is like that of the little squirrel; I must have my wheel, and I have chosen a harmless one, perhaps even one which my fellow-men would like to see incessantly in motion, and might even profit by its constant activity. My captors put me in a cage without any wheel available. But there is a power greater than man's which helped me to break my cage and run away altogether."

Prelooker's longings for the free shores of England are described in a passage which is both pathetic and poetic, such longings being indeed characteristic of practically all educated Russians who become sick at

heart from the continuous stifling of all liberal aspirations in their own native land. The passage is worth reproducing in full even only as showing what a fine command of English literary style he acquired after some four years of residence in this country, towards the end of which he wrote his book, *The Experiences of a Russian Reformer*.

"After a month's stay in Berlin and a short visit to friends in Hamburg, I left the latter by steamer, which carried me away direct to the much-dreamed-of and longed-for free banks of the Thames.

"Strange, misty and hazy—as Albion's shores for the most part are—were my ideas and notions of the new land of my adoption; and yet, unaccountable as it may seem, I began to love her before ever my feet touched her ground.

"Early in life I began to read England's greatest poets and thinkers, scientists and novelists; deeply in my youthful heart were engraven the images of heroes, pictures of bygone days, barons, knights, tournaments, peasants, highway robbers, fortified castles and underground passages, processions, cathedrals, abbeys, fighting armies Protestant martyrs—all those varied elements and subjects, immortalized by historian and poet, by painter and musician. To scenery, events, and people, a fertile imagination added a halo of romance, surrounding them with its own mystic creations, piling up charm upon charm appropriating it all as something my own, something that dwelt with and within me. The land of the just and the free! I had heard of her, I saw her, I dreamed of her, I knew her! I wanted to be one of her own, unfettered, unchained, just and free myself. And lo! she is now near, that fairyland of freedom, not in a dream and imagination, but in all reality, in her own form, flesh and blood. . . . I stood on the deck of the steamer, my eyes eagerly directed westward, watching as the dim outlines of the English coast began first

to loom on the horizon. Various conflicting emotions crowded themselves into my breast, but there was a calm in the depth of my soul, like the majestic surface of the water around me; I felt a tide of new strength filling all my being, calling out fresh powers for the new battle for existence, for ideas, for my poor brethren left far, far away behind."

In this country of his fondest poetical dreams Prelooker landed in August 1891 with a fortune of a little over two pounds in his pocket. This sum, by the way, was the remnant of two hundred German marks given him on his way to London by Professor Hermann Strack of the Berlin University for two hundred copies of his book *Rabbi Shalom*. This book in its original Yiddish edition was dedicated to the professor as the great Christian Philosemite, who has done so much to combat Christian superstitions against the Jews.

There was at that time in England no Alien Bill demanding from an immigrant the possession of five pounds, or else there would have been probably no occasion for writing the story of the further achievement of our reformer in this country. As it is, Prelooker's career in the new land of his adoption has been certainly quite unique, in a sense even phenomenal, and it can be safely said that no other Russian exile amongst us has been more successful than he in stirring the interest of the British public in Russian affairs and evoking widespread sympathy with the oppressed and downtrodden Russian people.

The story of his indefatigable labours in this country as a public lecturer and speaker, as an organizer of Russian committees, concerts, choirs, bazaars, as a contributor to various magazines and a prolific author of a number of books and pamphlets in English, all with the object of popularizing the Russian cause in this country, the ups and downs of his work, his varied experiences, vicissitudes and struggles not only with

"our friend the enemy," who sent special spies to watch his doings and movements, but also with "our enemy the friend," the Russian revolutionists (!)—all these events and episodes during a period of some twenty years would fill a thrilling and instructive volume, which indeed may before long be expected from the pen of our reformer himself. Here only a brief outline can be given of the activities of the outcast, for whom there was no room in all the immense and thinly populated dominions of the Czar, but who was received with the warmest welcome—nay, with generous practical support—in these small over-populated islands wherever and whenever he made his appearance as a preacher, speaker, or popular lecturer.

With strong recommendations from the chaplain of the English Church in Odessa to the late General Sir John Field, K.C.B., and Admiral Grant, C.B., London, Prelooker soon found many kind friends, and was able to earn a modest living by giving lessons in Russian and in German, he being a master of the latter language too. But a surprise and a turning-point in his career awaited him shortly, when one morning he received a telegram from the secretary of the Lady Sommerville Club, Oxford Street, London, asking him to deliver a lecture there the *same* evening instead of another Russian who was announced on the printed programme of the winter course, but who could not keep his engagement on account of illness. The surprise was a double one: firstly, to be called to give a lecture to an English audience in English after only a few months' sojourn in this country; secondly, after his petitions to the Russian authorities for the permission to deliver public lectures had wandered a couple of years from one Government department to another, and were finally refused altogether, the fact alone of being invited in the morning to deliver a lecture in the evening of the same day, and this without any police authorization, this fact

was so bewildering that for a moment Prelooker thought it was really too good to be true! However it was true, and he boldly accepted the invitation, though he had no time to prepare some notes even. His maiden lecture in English, however, was, in his own opinion, the best he ever gave, for at that time he was yet blissfully ignorant of all the idiosyncrasies of English character and politics, was entirely his own optimistic self, and gave vent to his long accumulated indignation and hatred of Russian despotism with such a fiery eloquence that the audience during two hours was electrified by his enthusiasm, many literally trembling under his thunderous tones as if in the presence of a bursting volcano!

This first public lecture was a tremendous success, and the stone was thus set rolling. He immediately received invitations to other places in England, Ireland and Scotland. Professor Alexander Stewart of the Aberdeen University, who some years before had met Prelooker in Berlin and who was at the time President of the Aberdeen Philosophical Society, organized a special lecture on Russia before that society, after which Prelooker was invited to give lectures and addresses in several other places in Aberdeen and the neighbourhood.

It is probable that Prelooker was the first in this country to lecture publicly on Count Tolstoy, and certainly he was the first to lecture on Tolstoy in an orthodox Scottish Kirk, on a Sunday evening, before a crowded congregation attracted to the church both by the subject of the lecture and the personality of the lecturer. This event took place in the spring of the same year in the historical Old Grey Friars Church, Edinburgh, the minister, Rev. John Glasse, M.A., D.D., conducting the devotional part, and the late famous Professor J. S. Blackie introducing the lecturer. Here a little amusing incident happened worth recording.

Prelooker was told in other smaller places in Scot-

land that "Auld Reekie," or Edinburgh, stood so inaccessibly high in learning, art, and general culture, that any lecturer or artist passing unhurt the ordeal of an Edinburgh audience had practically the gates of paradise opened to him, as his fame was henceforth established and he need not trouble about the criticism of other Scottish, English, or Irish audiences. As it was his first appearance in Edinburgh and under the chairmanship of such a learned professor as Professor Blackie, whose books he had read in Russian translations, Prelooker naturally was very nervous and trembling for his fate, held in the balance by the congregation of the Edinburgh Kirk—by the way a very advanced congregation, their pastor being a professed and pronounced Socialist, and at the time president of the local Fabian Society. So Prelooker was sitting in the pulpit with all eyes fixed on him, patiently awaiting for his doom and listening to the hymns and reading.

At last Professor Blackie, who, too, was accommodated with a chair in the pulpit, rose and, introducing the lecturer, asked him to give his address on Tolstoy. Prelooker, who is always resourceful in making the best use of favourable opportunities, commenced his address in the following strain—

"It gives me always much pleasure when I have the opportunity of addressing a British audience, but to-night my pleasure is, so to say, a double one, owing exclusively to the presence of your illustrious professor as my chairman. You will understand me better when I tell you that some years ago, while yet in Russia, I read all his books available in Russian translations, and was much enlightened and inspired by them; but of course I never dreamed of ever beholding their author in the flesh, especially on an occasion like this, when he, my teacher, should come to learn something from me, his unknown pupil. Alas! times have changed for the worse in Russia under the iron despotism

of the present reactionary Czar, Alexander III. Professor Blackie's books, which are good enough for you Scots, Irish and English, and which adorn the bookshelves of the *élite* of other nations of Europe or America, nay, these very same books which previously freely circulated even in Russia, have been suddenly found by the Russian Censorship pernicious for the subjects of the Czar, and accordingly have been suppressed, I suppose, during his Majesty's pleasure. Now, friends, the same destructive spirit that consigned Professor Blackie's books to the flames of a modern *auto-da-fé* has also driven——"

At this moment Professor Blackie, who remained sitting in the pulpit with the minister behind the lecturer, suddenly jumped up, caught the latter by his collar, and began to shake him violently, shouting something excitedly in his ear. The professor's eccentricities were well known all over Scotland, and the whole congregation smiled, some even bursting into suppressed laughter. Poor Prelooker, however, felt lost and thought his doom had now come, that he had said something so stupid, so offensive to a highly critical Edinburgh audience that in a moment the deacons would come up and turn him out from the church! He only caught the professor's words, "Dear me, dear me!" but what else he said he could not make out. Surmising that he was asked to stop his address and leave the pulpit Prelooker in despair turned silently to the minister for help or an explanation. The latter immediately said—

"It is all right. Professor Blackie only wants to know which of his books is interdicted in Russia. Just tell him the title of the book, and go on, it is all right."

Prelooker, regaining his mental equilibrium, turned to the congregation and said—

"Professor Blackie wants to know the title or titles of his books suppressed in Russia. Well, it is some

time since I read the official list published by the Russian Censorship of books no longer to be allowed to circulate in Russia. It was a striking list, I can assure you, striking for its stupidity; it was, too, a long list, giving numerous titles of books henceforth suppressed. But I distinctly recollect in this list the title of *Tcheteere Fasisa Morali*, Four Phases of Ethics, by Professor Blackie, or whatever the title might be in the original English work. I recollect this book particularly because I read it shortly before I read the list of forbidden books, and have even written down some quotations from it in my note-book. I recollect this book with special vividness also, because on seeing it numbered amongst offensive criminal literary productions I at first felt violently indignant against the Czar's sub-editors, who most piously and patriotically murder unceremoniously the world's greatest and noblest authors; then in another moment a better mood prevailed, and I uttered in my heart the famous prayer of old for a similar and no worse class of murderers, namely, 'Oh Lord, forgive them, for they know not what they do!'

"Well, what I wanted to say before being nearly shaken out of my wits by my venerable chairman was that the same spirit of religious intolerance and political despotism which condemned his books to the flames, has also driven me out of my native country, and I naturally rejoice to be now in a land, and to stand at this moment in an historical church, which have special grounds for glorying in the victories won for freedom of conscience.

"I feel, therefore, that I am speaking to friends in calling your attention to battles that are still furiously raging in other countries, and nowhere more desperately than in the so-called Holy Orthodox Russia, where at the head of the army of enlightenment and humanity stands the subject of my lecture to-night, my famous

compatriot Count Leo Tolstoy, whose life, teaching and labours I will now try to briefly survey."

It is almost needless to add that the congregation listened throughout with rapt attention, and that the discourse proved a real intellectual treat.

Professor Blackie afterwards wrote, "I heard Mr. Prelooker deliver a lecture on 'Tolstoy and the State of Society in Russia' full of interest, and with a fine moral contagion."

At that time the persecutions of the Russian Evangelical Community of the Stundists began to arouse the sympathetic attention of many churches in this country. As Prelooker was probably the only man in England who had first-hand knowledge of these sectarians, who had indeed preached amongst them on many occasions and received them frequently in his own "New Israel" gatherings, he soon was invited to various churches, particularly the Unitarian, Congregational and Baptist, to tell what he knew about them. His first address on the Stundists was given on a Sunday evening in the Unitarian Church, Highgate, London. He never stated that he was a Stundist himself, but simply told his experience amongst this body, whom he described in the most sympathetic terms. The then minister of the church, Rev. Robert Spears, editor of the Unitarian weekly, *The Christian Life*, did not ask Prelooker what his own religious creed was, and being voluntarily informed by the latter that he had never been baptized and did not believe in that ceremony, smilingly replied that his people did not believe themselves that baptism made the Christian, and that he welcomed to his pulpit even Mohammedans, Hindoos and others who desired to tell their beliefs and experience.

Prelooker was delighted to learn this broad spirit of the Christian pastor, and felt no scruples in occupying the pulpit in his church. This was his first experience of the kind, but he was astonished to see that he was

advertised in the papers and on a big placard outside the church as "A Russian Stundist." Mr. Spears explained to him that here in England they do not differentiate between various shades of Russian Nonconformity, but understand under Stundism all kinds of Dissent from the Russian Established Church. Prelooker accepted this explanation of an English theologian, and all the more so, as it was pointed out to him, that himself not being baptized and not holding other articles of Christian dogmatism it was all the more to his credit to plead so ardently the cause of his persecuted Christian compatriots.

The result of the interest awakened by Prelooker's lectures and addresses in Edinburgh was the formation of a representative Scottish Committee with the late Rev. William Paterson, of the Scottish Reformation Society, as hon. treasurer, with the object of encouraging our reformer's work in spreading knowledge about the Stundists and the Reform movement in Russia generally. By this time Prelooker had already covered a wide area in Scotland, and towards the end of 1893 an Edinburgh daily, *The Scottish Leader*, welcoming his return from the North, said—

"During the last nine months Mr. Prelooker has, single-handed, accomplished a great work in Scotland by his public lectures and addresses, evoking everywhere a great deal of sympathy with the unfortunate people of Russia. He received enthusiastic receptions in Dundee, Aberdeen and Inverness. Next Sunday he will appear again in Edinburgh, when he will deliver an address on 'The Position of Woman in the five Great Religions.' Mr. Prelooker is a devoted student of the Woman Question, and is connected with the leading women's societies in four countries."

This address on Woman in the religious systems of the world was but an extract of the above-mentioned lectures which the Russian Censorship declared to be

pernicious and forbade their delivery. It is interesting, therefore, to record that the address referred to in *The Scottish Leader* was delivered by Prelooker at St. David's Parish Church, Edinburgh, during the Sunday morning service instead of the usual sermon, the Rev. Alex. Webster, M.A., conducting the devotional part, and, of course, the address was found by all highly instructive and informative.

Altogether Prelooker's campaign in Scotland lasted some eighteen months; he organizing there not only lectures, but also Russian musical entertainments, and introducing, with the aid of lantern views, costumes, living pictures, etc., various aspects of Russian national life.

Before leaving Scotland in the autumn of 1894 Prelooker issued a detailed printed report, giving the names of all the places visited by him and absolutely all the moneys he received, whether as collections after his addresses, or as donations sent to him individually.

This report was sent to all the churches, institutions and persons concerned, and was largely quoted in Scottish papers, also in the London weekly, *The Christian World*, and latterly was fully reproduced in the first issue of the monthly magazine, *The Anglo-Russian*, founded by Prelooker in July 1897 and edited by him ever since.

We learn from this report that Prelooker had carried on a vigorous propaganda in the following towns, in many of them lecturing and speaking repeatedly: Aberdeen, Broughty Ferry, Dalkeith, Doune, Dumbarton, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Helensburgh, Inverness, Kilmarnock, Kirkcaldy, Lanark, Newport, North Berwick, Oban, Paisley, Portobello, Rothesay, St. Andrews, Selkirk, and many other places, in which he spoke at various meetings, but whence no contributions to his funds were made. Everywhere his addresses were reported at length and with the warmest sympathy

in the local papers, and outsiders might have easily carried away the impression that large funds were raised by Prelooker, judging by the enthusiasm he evoked everywhere. The bare truth, however, is that financially he could not even make both ends meet, and he left Scotland with some little debts to printers, which he soon after settled.

In his detailed report we find that the largest collection made after his address was at the Free Church, Newport, amounting to £12 2*s*.; the smallest collection was at the Forth U.P. Church Hall, Lanark, amounting to 5*s*. Altogether, including all individual donations, particulars of which are given in the report, the sum total raised during a period of some eighteen months of incessant labours amounted to £253 9*s*. 10½*d*. "The average income per week," says Prelooker, "was thus a little over £3. That sum scarcely sufficed to cover the expenses of travelling, hotels, hiring of halls, printing, advertising, postage, stationery, etc. I had to add to the public support my little earnings from private lecture engagements and literary contributions in order to carry on the Movement."

It is particularly important to record the above facts in view of the malicious rumours spread at the time by some self-interested and evil-minded foes and lightheartedly circulated by the usual gossip-mongers that Prelooker had not accounted for the large funds raised by him in Scotland.

Returning to England Prelooker started everywhere vigorous open-air campaigns as having at least the advantage of not involving him in debt on account of expenses. All the parks of London and numerous street corners available for public meetings, the sea beaches of Brighton, Eastbourne, Hastings, Ramsgate, Margate and other places, soon saw the picturesque figure of our reformer clad in native, very becoming, costume attracting huge crowds, at first simply curious

onlookers, but gradually becoming "enthused" in a cause many of them heard for the first time. In his ignorance of the character of the race-course audiences and eagerness to convert all and everybody to his cause, he even went one day to the Ascot Races, persuaded to do so by a missionary, who also went there to preach the Gospel of repentance from sin. But even there Prelooker was the most successful of all the preachers, who were astonished to learn at the end of the day that he had sold more than five hundred copies of his penny pamphlet which puts the Russian question in a nutshell, whilst they had hardly sold more than a dozen of their tracts. However, in spite of this success Prelooker carried away a not very flattering impression of the Ascot Races. "The sight reminded me of the arena in ancient Rome," he says, "only gladiators, lions and Christian martyrs were wanted to complete the picture. Besides, such foul language was spoken to me there publicly both by men and women as I never heard before even in Russia and which is probably forbidden by the English law."

At the same time Prelooker organized a series of conferences in the city of London, presided over by W. Evans Darby, Esq., LL.D. (Secretary of the Peace Society), the Rev. Walter Baxendale, Minister of the Congregational Church, West Norwood, and the Rev. George Giddins, Secretary of the Evangelical Continental Society. These conferences resulted in the foundation on the 1st of November 1895 of the Russian Reformation Society, with the above-named gentlemen and others as members of the committee, James Robertson, Esq. (head of the publishing firm James Nisbet & Co., as the treasurer, and Prelooker himself as hon. secretary. The Committee in its first official circular stated that the Society has for its object the promotion of a better mutual understanding between the inhabitants of Great Britain and Russia, and the

encouragement, in the first instance, of Russians who are striving for freedom of conscience in their native country, and for such reforms as have been accomplished in the States of Western Europe. The practical work of the Society was to be the publication of literature in both the English and the Russian languages, and the arrangement of meetings and lectures for the purpose of spreading a fuller knowledge of the national institutions, customs, literature, etc., of both countries; the publications in the Russian language to be disseminated chiefly amongst the numerous Russians residing permanently or travelling abroad, and whenever possible amongst the people in Russia itself.

Prelooker threw himself at once into the work of popularizing the new Society with his wonted zeal and enterprise, and shortly London saw probably for the first time a two days' purely Russian literary and musical entertainment, with an orchestra, choir, various exhibits, Samovar tea-drinking, and a series of *tableaux vivants* illustrating Russian wedding ceremonies, conscription scenes, etc. These entertainments were given at St. Martin's Town Hall, Charing Cross, and were opened by Sir John Hutton, then Chairman of the London County Council.

About the same time, *i. e.* towards the end of 1895, his book, often quoted here, *Under the Czar and Queen* Victoria. *The Experiences of a Russian Reformer*, made its appearance and produced really quite a sensation.

At the end of this book the Author briefly sums up everything he said, and gives reasons why the British should help the Russians in their struggle for freedom. The reasons and his further statements are important enough to be fully reproduced here—

"1. Because you, as citizens and subjects of the great British Empire, enjoy all the blessings and privileges of a free civilization. You elect your Parliament and

Government; you can meet at your convenience for worship, instruction, or amusement; you can speak, preach, write, and educate your children as you like; you can travel from one town to another without a passport; you can change your residence from one house to another in the same town without being obliged to report preliminarily to the police the date of your removal and your new address; your servants are not police spies, and you are not dependent on them as to the number of guests you invite to your house and the nature of your conversation; you can post your letters without fear of them being opened and read before delivery. Finally, your promising and talented young people—flowers of the nation—are not only not crushed in the blossom, repelled from society, made to pine in banishment and prison, but on the contrary, are nurtured and encouraged by the strong and the wise to become the leading citizens in the country. These fundamental rights of human beings, which seem so natural and a matter of course to you, are denied to all the millions of inhabitants in the dominions of the Czar, by no other argument than that of brutal force. And he who sits at a table groaning with the bounties of life cannot possibly, or ought not to, be indifferent to the cry of suffering outside his door.

"2. Because you are a nation professing Christianity, and one of Christ's cardinal teachings, as illustrated in the Divine parable of the Good Samaritan and all through His life and gospel, is to heal the wounds of the sorrowful and afflicted without distinction of race, tongue or nationality. You must stretch out a helping hand to your afflicted brethren in Russia, otherwise you will be unworthy of the religion you profess.

"3. Because the enormous army, the warlike aggressions and tendencies of Russia, which are a constant menace to the peace of Europe, are *not in the interest of the Russian nation as such, but only of the handful*

of the ruling class. Russia is about twenty-two times more thinly populated than Great Britain, the country is rich and fertile, the people, therefore, being besides of a most peaceable disposition, have no need whatever to annex new territories.

"4. Because international relationships in our time have reached such a stage that each calamity which befalls one portion of humanity tells directly or indirectly on the interests of the remainder. The official reports, both of the Board of Trade in this country and of the Ministry of Finance in Russia, equally show that any economic depression in the latter causes enormous decrease in the import of commodities from the former, the loss amounting to many millions. Economic depressions in Russia, however, are due in the first place to the indescribable mismanagement and abuses by those in power, to the effects of a prodigious army, to the thousands of Uriadniks and detectives spread like a net all over the country to watch the movements of the citizens, to the horde of demoralized and corrupt officials, to the unparalleled taxes under which the people are groaning at every step, to the lifeless Church and the enslaved Press; in short, to the whole rotten system of absolute autocracy and tyranny.

"5. Because, finally, thousands of British residents in Russia, though enjoying protection under certain treaties, practically undergo and suffer the same persecutions, the same unbearable regulations, taxations and innumerable inconveniences in their daily life as the Russians themselves. Read, for instance, in Mr. Stead's book, *Truth about Russia,* the story of the expulsion of the two Englishmen, the brothers Hilton. They were upright, industrious, sober men, managing extensive mines in Russia. Their life and conduct were a silent but most eloquent protest against the surrounding officials and priests, who by foul means finally effected their expulsion from the country."

The Author states that to expect real reform from the throne is unreasonable, because—

"In suppressing free speech, free meetings, free Press, in upholding the Greek Orthodox Church, in keeping up an enormous army with all its disastrous moral and economic effects upon the people, the Russian Autocracy, it must be admitted, pursues a policy quite in accordance with the interests of its own existence, as an Autocracy. For the moment the people are allowed to assemble together and make their grievances heard, the appalling iniquities and outrages of the existing system will be brought to light, each man's and woman's soul stirred from its depths, and there will be an end to Czar, officials and priests. There is no hope, therefore, of relief and freedom coming from the throne."

The salvation of Russia, our Author insists, must come from the Russian people themselves, and there is already a wide movement in that country towards progress and reform—

"These progressive elements, however, are not formidable enough in numbers, as they are allowed neither to organize themselves, nor to advocate their cause by means of literature and through the Press. The Censorship interdicts everything containing the slightest allusions to the wrongs of the present system; and the people are compelled to read only what is approved of by loyal or hired orthodoxy, and are often excited to struggle against their own brethren who are working for the good of the country. But Autocracy, while keeping the strictest watch against the penetration into its dominions of Western political and religious ideas, is utterly helpless to prevent the thousands of Russians residing permanently or visiting different places in Europe to read what they like, and thus have their eyes opened to the lamentable degradation, nay, agony of their native country. And here it is that the British and all lovers of humanity and freedom could render

invaluable services to the Russian cause, namely, by helping to disseminate literature in the Russian language, which cannot possibly fail to become a source of enlightenment and great blessing to the Russian nation. While abroad the Russians, with a natural eagerness, avail themselves of the opportunity to read everything interdicted in their own country. On their return home the Customs officers may search their boxes, but surely will never be able to discover and confiscate the contrabands contained in that wonderful box which God Himself fixed upon the shoulders of every man. A considerable amount of reform literature already finds its way direct into Russia itself."

To carry on more systematically this literary propaganda Prelooker proposed in his book to establish a monthly periodical, to be published in London in both the English and Russian languages. On all sides approval of this scheme was expressed, but it took some time before the real "sinews of war," the financial support, was forthcoming. At last, in July 1897 the first issue made its appearance, consisting of twelve pages royal quarto, the heading with its motto from Tennyson running as follows—

THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN

Looking forward to the time

"When the war-drum throbs no longer, and the battle-flags are furled
In the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World."

The appearance of *The Anglo-Russian* was hailed by the English Press all over the world with the warmest welcome. From the first issue up to the present the paper has been systematically sent *gratis* every month to the leading newspapers and magazines in Great Britain, America, France, Germany, Austria, Italy, India, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and on special

occasions to the newspapers of other countries, also to ambassadors and consuls, important societies, clubs, public libraries, members of Parliament, and generally to the most influential men and women all over the world.

It can be safely said that no other periodical of the kind has been, and is, so widely and so largely quoted in the world's Press as the little *Anglo-Russian*, from which whole pages and whole articles are frequently reproduced in other papers, though they do not always mention the source. It will be seen, therefore, that the journal, now in the fourteenth year of its existence, has undoubtedly rendered incalculable services to the Russian cause by popularizing it in the whole civilized world to a degree never attained by any other periodical of the kind. The fourteen annual volumes now available present certainly a kind of a Russian Encyclopædia, containing numerous valuable historical, political, religious, literary, commercial, ethnographical linguistic and other articles, besides biographies, secret documents, sketches of Russian folk-lore, poems, tales, essays on Russian music, wit and humour, mostly of a character seldom to be found in any other English publication, especially the innumerable original articles from the pen of the editor himself.

Since the establishment of the monthly *Anglo-Russian* fourteen years ago Prelooker has had, and is having, the world for his audience, and has been the recipient of a vast correspondence from friends and sympathizers in the remotest corners of the globe. The bulk of the work in preparing the journal naturally falls upon his own willing shoulders, and the work is by no means a light one. For he has to watch almost everything that appears in the world's Press in regard to Russia, receives innumerable periodicals in various languages in exchange for the *Anglo-Russian*, numerous books dealing with Russia for review, and has

mostly to reply personally in several languages to the numerous correspondence, as he has no paid secretary, and voluntary assistance, though frequently and cheerfully given, cannot always be requisitioned or made systematic and relied upon. Besides, he is a believer in the saying that if you wish a thing to be done well, do it yourself, and accordingly he not only edits his journal, reads MSS., corrects proofs, etc., but writes most of the articles, reviews, notes, etc., himself.

Notwithstanding this work for his own journal, Prelooker found time to contribute to other magazines, and, as we shall presently see, also to write a number of books and pamphlets, as well as lecture before Philosophical, Geographical, and various Literary, Y.M.C.A. and other Associations, Colleges, Clubs, Mechanic Institutes, etc.

As a lecturer on Russia he is probably the most sought for, and besides numerous places in Scotland already mentioned he has fulfilled lecturing engagements all over England, including: Aberdare, Beccles, Bexhill-on-Sea, Blackburn, Brighton, Birmingham, Corbridge-on-Tyne, Cheltenham, Clifton, Crawley, Droitwich, Eastbourne, Egham, Forfar, Gateshead-on-Tyne, Harrogate, Hastings, High Wycombe, Hull, Keswick, Llandrindod-Wells, Lenzie, Liverpool, Lowestoft, Malvern, Margate, Moseley, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Newquay, Painswick, Paisley, Pulborough, Ramsgate, Sheffield, St. Ives, Southend-on-Sea, Southsea, Southport, Southwold, Whitley Bay, Woolwich, etc., besides speaking at drawing-room and other meetings in other towns and country places.

Prelooker has received probably the highest compliment possible for a lecturer, perhaps indeed quite exceptional. For at least on two occasions the lecture committees were so highly pleased with him that after the lecture they quite spontaneously paid him more than the fee agreed upon. Both cases were in Scotland,

namely, in Aberdeen, where he lectured before the Philosophical Society, and at Forfar, where he was engaged by the Roberts-Wright Lecture Fund.

During the summer, when nearly all regular Societies discontinue their lecture courses, Prelooker organized on his own account not only lectures, but bazaars and exhibitions on quite an elaborate scale, and such were not only fully noticed and reported upon in the local but also in the London Press. The most notable undertakings of this kind took place in the summer of 1896 in Hastings, where the exhibition lasted three days, and in the summer of 1899 in Eastbourne, where it lasted nearly a month. The event in the latter place was widely advertised on the L.B.S.C. line and in all adjacent places under the attractive title of "Moscow in Eastbourne." A splendid Russian choir was especially organized for the occasion, and the sections represented not only Russia, but also Finland, Poland, Caucasus, and Armenia. Regular lectures, concerts, tableaux, etc., all of a novel and peculiarly Russian kind, were given twice daily, many of the Living Pictures producing a real sensation, such for instance as "Farewell at the Siberian Boundary Post," "The Conscript," "Flogging the Living and the Dead,"[1] etc. From the account in the issue of *The Anglo-Russian* of October 1899 we learn that, after all the expenses were met, Prelooker was able to hand over to Mr. Fred Threadgold, Hon. Secretary Armenian Students' Home, Maidstone, the sum of £60 4*s*. 2*d*. for Armenian goods sold, that

[1] In the time of Nicholas I (1825–55), when flogging was the most favoured punishment, and two or even three thousand strokes by the "Plet" were administered for most trivial offences, few victims survived more than five hundred strokes; the flogging party nevertheless continued lashing to pieces the dead body, as they had to carry out literally the order to administer so many strokes. It is a well-known fact that on an occasion when a soldier was sentenced to death for desertion, Nicholas said that he was a Christian and merciful ruler, and therefore he commuted the death sentence and ordered flogging instead to the number of only five thousand strokes!

about £35 in cash was left for the Russian Reformation Society, besides goods, scenery and decorations to the value of about £100 left for other occasions. Commenting on the great success of this exhibition, especially when taking into consideration the small means he had at his disposal, Prelooker says in *The Anglo-Russian*—

"The Exhibition was throughout a continuous demonstration on behalf of a cruelly downtrodden nation. Let the enemies of England say what they like, the fact remains that in no other country, except English-speaking America, could such a demonstration have taken place, with the unanimous hearty support of the public and the Press alike. For nearly four weeks, day after day, numbers of people attended the lectures, tableaux, etc., which aim to impress upon the mind and imagination the sufferings of millions from unparalleled despotism, also the ways in which their deliverance could be hastened. Not a single dissentient voice was heard all the time among the numerous audiences. Conservatives and Liberals, Churchmen and Nonconformists, alike listened earnestly to the information conveyed, expressing hearty sympathy with the cause advocated, and acquiring a new interest in the pro-Russian movement to which many were totally indifferent but a day before. 'We shall not forget the Russian Exhibition,' is a phrase which it was our pleasure to hear frequently uttered by visitors. That they meant it, they proved by coming again and again to the Central Hall, though the same lectures and entertainments had to be repeated owing to the majority of the audiences coming for the first time."

Of course "Moscow in Eastbourne" was first of all very beneficial to the "Queen" of the English watering-places herself, the novelty having attracted many visitors, amongst them a number of Russians, including several police spies of both sexes. These spies naturally

proved to be the most amiable and interested patrons of the Exhibition. One of them, a prepossessing Russian titled lady, went even to the length of making the friendly acquaintance of a servant girl of the private house where Prelooker was staying, and afterwards succeeded in taking her away in triumph to Russia, as material evidence of her patriotic and loyal labours in England!

After a brief respite from his labours in connection with the exhibition in Eastbourne, Prelooker launched upon a new journalistic enterprise. This was the establishment in 1900 of the "Ruscan (Russo-Scandinavian) Press Agency." Russian encroachments upon the hitherto guaranteed liberties of Finland began seriously to alarm Sweden, Norway, and even Denmark with her Scandinavian kinship of origin and sympathies. It was felt, therefore, that a systematic and more frequent service of general news from Russia and the Scandinavian countries, including Finland, would be very timely and acceptable to the English Press, and would further Scandinavian interests in England. With that object the Ruscan Press Agency was established as an entirely private enterprise by a Finno-Swede, acting as chief correspondent from Stockholm, and by Prelooker acting as editor in London. The English Press received the new Press Agency favourably, and it will be remembered that for some time news from Russia, Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark began to appear more frequently in the pages of English papers. However, the working expenses of the Ruscan Agency were too heavy, other Press Agencies were stimulated to increase their services from the same countries, whilst the demand for special Scandinavian news was not large enough to support competing agencies. The Ruscan Agency proved a financial failure, and had to be given up after a couple of years of energetic efforts to maintain its existence. Since then, as need scarcely be stated,

Scandinavian news does not figure very frequently in the English daily papers.

Of Prelooker's other indefatigable enterprises for popularizing the Russian cause in England and encouraging the study of the Russian language, the opening by him of the Russian Residential Institute in London in September 1901 must be mentioned, as it was at the time warmly welcomed by the Press and created a good deal of interest in various circles. In the issue of *The Anglo-Russian* of the same date he fully explains the importance of the Russian language from a political, commercial and literary point of view, not to speak of its purely linguistic aspect. He tells from his own experience how best to learn a foreign language, and what advantages and facilities the Russian Residential Institute offers. The place was to be thoroughly Russian in style, even to the wall-paper; with native teachers, native cook and servants, Russian library and little museum of various Russian collections, with evening entertainments, lecturettes, and other performances, all proceedings to be in the Russian language.

The reputed difficulty of learning Russian was thus to be reduced to its minimum; indeed the study was to be made even attractive and pleasant, the student being surrounded with a genuine Russian atmosphere and hearing Russian spoken the whole day.

Very commodious premises were taken for the new Institute in the best part of healthy Upper Norwood, London, and as several London papers gave editorially the new enterprise wide publicity, inquiries as to terms, etc., began to arrive, especially from military officers intending to take up Russian for their examinations. In fact, Prelooker calculated that military and naval officers would be the first to avail themselves of the new Institute, and the calculation would most likely have proved correct, were it not for the South African War, which had lately broken out and which called to

the front a large number of British officers. There was not a sufficient demand for Russian from other classes to justify the existence of the Institute, and as the establishment was very expensive, it had soon to be given up, though Prelooker believed that it would have ultimately succeeded if he had possessed the means to carry it through the initial stages for a couple of years. The attempt, however, was a noble one, and the idea of the enterprise under the present more favourable circumstances, still holds good and should be taken up by some one else as a purely business concern.

Prelooker's reputation as an organizer of Russian lectures, concerts, exhibitions, etc., has evidently spread widely, and when, at the end of 1902, Sir H. Beerbohm Tree decided to run a dramatized version of Tolstoy's *Resurrection* at His Majesty's Theatre, he was advised to approach our Reformer on the subject of supplying an efficient native Russian choir. Inquiries at St. Petersburg and other places showed that to bring over a choir from Russia would have proved a very costly affair, so Prelooker very energetically hunted up Russian singers in England, and in a short time organized them into such a perfect choir, that it formed one of the chief attractions of the play, delighting the large audiences, and eliciting the unanimous highest eulogy of the Press. Indeed, many repeatedly visited the play for the sake of the Russian music. His articles, too, in *The Anglo-Russian* on the ethics and æsthetics of *Resurrection*, as a novel and as a play, created much interest, so much so, that the management of the theatre found it advantageous to order large numbers of the Journal and spread them in advance in all those provincial towns to be subsequently visited by the touring company playing *Resurrection*.

The record of Prelooker's activities in England would be by far incomplete if no mention were made of his ardent labours for the enfranchisement of women, a

cause which he has warmly espoused whilst yet in Russia. We have seen how the interdiction of his lectures on "Woman in the Five Great Religious Systems of the World" made him decide to leave Russia altogether. Some years before that, in 1887, whilst on a visit to Berlin, he made the acquaintance there of the late Frau Lina Morgenstern, the famous pioneer and leader of the Woman's movement in Germany, and began to contribute to her weekly paper, *Die Hausfrauen Zeitung,* also to her large and important work published in three volumes, *Die Frauen des XIX Jahrhunderts,* writing for the latter biographies of celebrated Russian women.

On his arrival in England, in 1891, Prelooker lost no time in acquainting himself with the very few centres which existed at the time for the advocacy of Women's Rights. When, the following winter, a three days' Women's Conference was organized in the house of Dr. and Mrs. Pankhurst, Russell Square, London, our Russian Suffragist was one of the most frequent and attentive visitors, and participated in the discussions with his wonted warmth. He soon lectured on "Russian Women" before the Women's Progressive Association at a drawing-room meeting in London, Mr. Walter S. B. McLaren, M.P., the veteran Woman Suffragist, in the chair.

The latter afterwards wrote to Prelooker—

"As Chairman of the meeting, I think I may truly say that every one enjoyed it, and that one felt that you were thoroughly acquainted with your subject, and able to give us much information. I am glad to hear from various sources that your lectures are much appreciated."

Since then Prelooker has addressed innumerable meetings all over the country on the subject of Women's Suffrage, introducing it even at his special lectures on Russia when touching on Russian women's aspirations,

much to his own material disadvantage. Chairmen and Secretaries of Societies which engaged him to lecture on Russia objected to Women's Suffrage being advocated by him from their platforms. Some of them even wrote complaints to his lecture agent, who remonstrated with him, pointing out that he is injuring his career as a public professional lecturer, but all this was of no avail. Prelooker's reply is that he is advocating the cause of justice and freedom for the Russians, and that the Russians, like other nations, consist of both men and women. They who are piously indignant against the slavery of the Russians, and even contribute shillings and pounds towards their emancipation, but understand under "Russians" *men* only, and not Russian women, are themselves slaves and in want of moral and spiritual emancipation.

Prelooker's argument may be all right, but the point is that the majority of his audiences do not share it, and some of them do not want to have him again as a lecturer. He knows the sad fact very well, but sticks to his principle and says: "If I am invited to preach or lecture, it is my duty as a teacher to speak the truth plainly as I myself conceive it, and not as it would better please the more retrograde and unenlightened members of my audiences. Were I able to compromise with my conscience, I should certainly have found no need for leaving Russia and coming to England."

Our Reformer was not lax in his devotion to the Woman's cause when in 1897 he started his monthly *Anglo-Russian*. In the official statement of the various "aspirations" of the new periodical we find one for the "attainment of just laws for both sexes alike," and from the very beginning the journal advocated a vigorous, active, though not "militant" (in the sense of smashing windows, etc.,) campaign for Women's Suffrage, suggesting even a regular Woman's strike, as wives, housekeepers, teachers, clerks, etc. In Dec. 1901 Prelooker

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was invited to give several lectures in Cheltenham by the local Women's Suffrage Society, of which Mrs. Frances Swiney, wife of General John Swiney and author of the well-known work, *The Awakening of Woman*, was President. From that time Mrs. Swiney began to collaborate systematically in *The Anglo-Russian*, supplying it every month with a page or more of earnestly and brilliantly written notes under the general heading of "Women amongst the Nations." This page is ever since a striking and highly appreciated feature of *The Anglo-Russian*, and has greatly encouraged Women Suffrage workers some years before the present militant societies were formed.[1] On the other hand, the advocacy of this cause has cost Prelooker the loss of a number of his generous supporters, who objected to *The Anglo-Russian* even mentioning Women's Suffrage!

Deeply convinced of the injustice man has exercised towards woman in all climes and in all times, and eager to do his utmost towards remedying the wrong by helping to educate and enlighten public opinion on the subject, Prelooker resolved on making a sensational public protest, which hitherto has not yet been made by any man in England, nor indeed by many women. But, before telling of this incident, it is necessary to mention an event in his private life which strengthened his determination to make a protest amounting to a deliberate breaking of the English law, generally held by him in greatest respect and admiration.

In 1905 Prelooker married an Englishwoman, Miss Ethel Thorpe, daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. William Thorpe of Trosley, Kent. The union has been blessed with the birth of a daughter, after which the family settled in the village of Ifield, near Crawley, Sussex. Nothing is swifter than thought, especially the fore-

[1] A portrait of Mrs. Swiney and an article by Prelooker on her literary works and labours as a pioneer of Women's Rights appeared in *The Anglo-Russian*, January 1902.

thought of an affectionate and proud father for the future of his only daughter. Baby Miriam Prelooker was developing into a fine bright infant, and before she was two began to show unmistakable signs of her "political" independence, with a will, taste, and general ideas all her own. When playing with other children she is decidedly the leading spirit, and her fond parents quite seriously and impartially believe that she is superior in intelligence, liveliness, and enterprise even to all the boys of her age she has yet met, and—what is most important—the boys' own parents think so too!

Now, one day quite an ordinary and very prosaic thing happened to Prelooker, a thing which, indeed, regularly happens to millions of English people, and, for the matter of that, to the people of all other civilized, Christian or non-Christian countries: the tax-collector called, and in a very polite and friendly way explained the object of his visit. Thereupon a colloquy ensued, which, both for its seriousness and its humour, is certainly not in the everyday experience of a tax-collector anywhere. Prelooker, who during all the years he has been residing in this country, proved a most law-abiding citizen, suddenly conceived the idea of ascertaining how far he enjoyed civil rights, and asked the tax-collector whether on paying the taxes he will have a Parliamentary vote.

"No," was the decided reply, "you are an alien, and you must first become a naturalized British subject."

"Well, will my wife have the vote if she pays the taxes? She is a natural-born British subject."

"No; in the first place, in marrying you she has now become a Russian herself, and in the second place women have not the Parliamentary vote in England."

"Well, sir, excuse my plain and perhaps rough speaking. A Jersey cow will always remain a Jersey cow, and likewise an Englishwoman will remain such to the end of her days, even if she marries ten negroes

or Hottentots. But I would like to ask you a rather personal question, if you don't mind: have you a little boy—son, brother, or little nephew?"

"Yes."

"And will he have a vote when he grows up?"

"Yes, of course, if he is qualified."

"Well, then, this virtually means to say that you are sure that your little boy will grow up a better, more honest, more capable, more sober, and in other respects more fit citizen than this my little darling daughter standing here beside me is ever likely to become, and that your boy will make all the laws and regulations for her, and she will have blindly to obey them, or otherwise be punished, imprisoned and tortured as a breaker of the law. Well, sir, I love and esteem too much this my little daughter to allow such an insult to her to go unchallenged. Furthermore, I believe too strongly that she will grow up not a bit a worse woman than your boy a good man to pay my taxes in obedience to these laws without any protest against their injustice and foolishness."

"Well, sir, I see what you mean, but I cannot help it, I cannot change the law."

"I'm glad to presume that you at least *wish* the law to be changed, but you are mistaken in believing that you cannot change it. Men make the laws and men can abolish them, or improve them. I at least will contribute something towards such improvement by refusing to pay the taxes as a protest."

"But that will not help your cause in the least. You will have to pay in the end and even more, as the court expenses will be charged to you, and your furniture will be sold by public auction."

"Never mind that. I have spent time and money on some other good causes, and this cause is surely one worthy even of some greater sacrifice. But you are mistaken, the cause will be helped by such a protest.

When people are fast asleep and it is time for them to get up, the watchman must knock loudly at their doors or windows. A publicly made protest will make the indifferent ones interested, and the already interested ones probably more sympathetic; and so an impetus, a wave, a current of thought will be set in motion which must ever increase in its course, like the ever-larger circles caused by a stone thrown into stagnant water."

Close upon the demand for the taxes came also that for local rates. These too were refused, and after the usual warnings and some kindly attempts by friendly neighbours to persuade Prelooker of the seriousness and uselessness of his offence against the law, he was finally summoned to appear before the Horsham Petty Sessions Court. The proceedings took place on the 28th of March 1908, a distress warrant was issued, and the police were instructed to carry it out on April 4. On both these dates public meetings were organized in Horsham, Crawley, and Ifield, and were addressed by Prelooker and by two members of the Women's Social and Political Union, Miss New and Miss Lightman, who came down from London on purpose for the occasion. The chief object of this "passive resistance" being the raising of public interest in the Women's movement, and this having been attained, Prelooker now paid his rates and taxes together with the court expenses, considering it superfluous to allow his furniture to be taken away and sold by auction. Later on Prelooker gave hospitality to the Women's Freedom League's Touring Van, and organized in Crawley more meetings, addressed by Mrs. How Martyn, A.R.C.S., B.Sc., the Hon. Secretary of that League, Miss Muriel Matters, and others.

As the topic is one of the "burning" questions of the day, and as many people will undoubtedly condemn Prelooker's action in this case, a hearing should at least

be given to what he has to say in his own defence. The following article from his pen is therefore quoted as it appeared in *The Anglo-Russian*, April 1908—

"Saturday, March 28th, and April 4th, the quiet, peaceable inhabitants of Horsham, Ifield, and Crawley, in 'sleepy Sussex' were to a degree excited by the unprecedented event of a man, mere man, and he an alien residing amongst them, being summoned at the Horsham Petty Sessions for refusing to pay rates and taxes as a *moral* protest against the political disqualifications of his wife and daughter, and Women generally. The excitement was enhanced by the fact that two brave Englishwomen, members of the now redoubtable Women's Social and Political Union, London, came down to Horsham on purpose to assist at open-air meetings and vigorously to defend, even to glorify, the offence against law committed by the mere man and alien. Some people, who can never see any better motives in others, unhesitatingly stigmatized the action as prompted by notoriety-seeking and self-advertisement, the more charitably disposed defined it simply as that of a crank or fanatic incited by the Woman's agitation of the last couple of years.

"Readers of *The Anglo-Russian* will scarcely need to be reminded that I have strongly advocated active agitation by Women, even a general Women's strike, for the attainment of their just claims, ever since this paper was established, now some eleven years ago, many years before the present militant Woman Suffrage Movement commenced. As a matter of fact, I have been a devoted student of the Woman Question under its numerous aspects now for some thirty years. Indeed, it was the suppression by the Russian Ecclesiastical Censorship of my cherished labours on 'The Comparative Position of Women in Judaism, Christianity, Mohammedanism, Brahmanism, and Buddhism" that

made me give up my official post and seek a new home in this country of freedom of conscience and of the platform. As very little opportunity was given me at the court to properly explain my conduct, I think my readers will be interested in a brief statement of the reasons of my conscientious objection to pay rates and taxes.

"As an alien I have no vote whatever in this country, though I have been residing here for about seventeen years, have always cheerfully obeyed the English law, and have as vital an interest in the good order and prosperity of England as any British citizen. However, I waive my personal grievance, as I can conceive some weighty patriotic and political reasons for the exclusion of an alien from full British citizenship. But I can see no earthly reason why my wife, an Englishwoman by birth, education, and general character, should equally be politically disfranchised simply on account of her sex. It is, of course, impossible for me to enter here upon a discussion of the whole complicated Woman question, but it seems to me that its fundamental and essential features and facts can be summarized in a few words—

"(1) It is Man and Woman together who form the human race and contribute to its continuity, the Mother's share being even a more onerous and painful one.

"(2) Absolutely in all human affairs, Woman's interests are as vital and essential as those of Man, and indeed quite identical, and there is not a single line or sphere of activity tending to the well-being of the race to which Woman can remain indifferent.

"(3) Nevertheless, in all times and in all climes, laws made by Man alone were, and still are, in his own favour, the Woman being supposed to have been ordained by the Creator Himself to be kept in subjection. In reality, however, there is no more Providential design

and justification in the subjection of woman than in the numerous cases when man succeeds in keeping in subjection his fellow neighbour of his own sex. In both cases the motive power of Man's action is his selfishness, not altogether unnatural, and the instinctive desire common to all animals of the lowest and the highest order, to satisfy their own needs, and make themselves comfortable at the expense of their neighbours, male or female.

"(4) No reason has yet been advanced why a man should be less just and considerate to his own mother than to his father, to his sister than to his brother, to his daughter than to his son, or to some one else's mother, sister or daughter than to that some one else's father, brother or son.

"The above is to me the whole Woman Question in a nutshell. Anyhow, it is not women who have to prove their claims to the rights and privileges of citizenship, but it is for us, men, to prove our right to refuse our fellow sister citizens their inalienable birthright as human beings, to justice and equality before the law.

"As a Russian, voteless and rightless in my own native country, I can more fully realize, understand and sympathize with the claims of my disfranchised sisters in England or in other countries. We Russians do not want to be exploited and governed against our will by brute force alone, and are fighting against injustice and tyranny by all available means. The intelligent women all over the world are now fighting the same noble battle for justice and freedom, and hitherto they have, of course, been only very mild in the choice of their weapons in comparison with those frequently used by men in their political warfare.

"To me it is clear that we are now on the very eve of the realization of Woman's noblest aspirations; the Woman's agitation is bound to increase, and there can

only be one issue. Then why uselessly waste time, energy, and material means in opposing a cause the triumph of which is practically assured?

"With all due respect, and even affection for British Constitutional institutions, I have nevertheless ventured to deliberately break an imperfect English law, actuated by a desire to encourage the true spirit of free citizenship awakened at last in our fellow sisters. Perhaps other men will act likewise, then we of the present generation may yet live to see the advent of Women's political enfranchisement which, in my conviction, is bound to lead to a higher, purer, and generally better state of a just and free humanity."

It remains now in conclusion to give a simple enumeration of Prelooker's literary works hitherto not mentioned here.

In 1885 he published *in Russian: Principles of Altruism in the Ethical Systems of Judaism and Christianity, and the Future Prospects of Both Religions.* In 1888 he wrote and published in *Yiddish* two issues of *Rabbi Shalom*, popularizing the "New Israel" movement. In 1890, during a four months' stay in Vienna, he wrote and published in *German: Zwischen Judenthum, Christenthum, und allen anderen Religionen. Drama in einem Aufzuge und Zwei Bildern.* This publication was immediately confiscated by the Austrian police, but was re-issued next year in Hamburg. Whilst in Vienna Prelooker also edited in *German* and wrote an introduction in the same language to a work which he published under the title: *Fur Juden und Antisemiten*, containing an eloquent appeal to Christians by N. Kameras for a better attitude towards the Jews, and an appeal to the latter for reform and assimilation with Christians.

In 1894 Prelooker issued his first publication in English: *The Hidden Jewel, or Ideas and Forms in Religion,* with illustrations by Mrs. Scott-Lauder-

Thompson and Deputy Inspector-General Dr. Scott Lauder, R.N.

During 1897–99 his serial, *From the Stage to the Cross,* an Anglo-Russian political novel, ran in his journal, *The Anglo-Russian.*

In 1902 he entirely re-wrote in English his above-mentioned story, *Rabbi Shalom on the Shores of the Black Sea,* introducing quite new ideas, scenes and episodes, the publication of which would have been impossible in Russia.

In 1904 appeared his *Russia, what she was, and what she is. An Excursion into a Land of Seething Volcanoes,* a book which gives a short history of the country, an account of the internal administration, and a comprehensive description of all the oppositional and revolutionary elements among the Russian and non-Russian nationalities composing the empire of the Czar.

In 1905 Prelooker translated from English into Russian the history by Allan Estlake of the well-known "Oneida Community," which existed for some thirty years in the United States of America, creating all the time a great sensation by its very unorthodox institutions. The translation sent for approval to the Russian Censorship was confiscated, but it was printed in Geneva and published by *The Anglo-Russian,* London.

The same year Prelooker wrote in *Russian* and published: *Wanted: an Anti-Government Government. Russians, Poles, Jews, Finns, Armenians, Letts, Lithuanians, and others, unite!*

A little later he translated and published in *Russian,* with his own introduction and biographical note of the Author, who was Prelooker's personal friend: *An Appeal to the Russian Army,* by Karl Blind, the veteran hero of the German revolution of 1848, who died in London some three years ago. Finally in 1907 he wrote his most comprehensive and valuable work: *Heroes and Heroines of Russia. True and Thrilling Revolution*

Stories, which has produced a real sensation, and is considered a classic upon the subject. It is no exaggeration to say that no other book of recent times has evoked such a chorus of rare praise in the British Press, with the single exception of a well-known reactionary weekly, which found the book bad in every respect, including the English style so much admired by all other reviewers.

The above list does not include *all* his stories and essays which he contributed to various magazines, some only of which are reproduced in this volume.

Prelooker has now been in this country some twenty years, and it will be admitted that he "eateth not the bread of idleness," and that he has made already "a Giant's contribution to both Literature and the Platform," as Guy Roslyn expresses himself in a sketch of our subject, which has just appeared in his monthly magazine, *The Biographer.*

Recently Prelooker received with the greatest joy the information that the "New Israel" movement in Russia, which he had believed to be quite dead since he left the country, was in reality very much alive, and was spreading so much that Government action was again contemplated for the suppression of the heresy. And in this case a remarkable thing happened, which reminds one of the origin and early days of Christianity, if such a parallel is not irreverent. Christ's Gospel was certainly first of all preached to His own brethren, the Jews, and when they rejected it, His Apostles went to the Gentiles, who accepted it more favourably, and thus the Gentile nations came into the Christian inheritance which should have belonged first of all to the "seed of Abraham." Exactly the same happened with the modern "New Israel" propaganda in Russia. Rejected by the Synagogue, we find it spreading since among the peasantry belonging to the Established Church of Russia, who have formed several communities openly

calling themselves "New Israelites," and are evidently strongly imbued with the spirit of proselytizing for the conversion of others. Of the strength of this movement and the alarm it causes to the Orthodox, one may judge by the fact that at the Congress of Missionaries of the Greek Orthodox Church held at Kieff a couple of years ago, papers were read on the "New Israel" heresy, and a whole series of measures were devised and adopted for recommendation to the Holy Synod for the checking or total suppression of this latest heretical outbreak within the Established Church.

It is thus that the prophecy of the liberal-minded priest, uttered in a conversation with Prelooker some twenty-eight years ago, after reading his book *New Israel,* as recorded in the beginning of this sketch, came now to be literally true, showing that the good seeds scattered even on a poor soil are bearing noble fruit when wafted farther afield.

In England, whilst labouring for several cherished causes, Prelooker is not, however, formally identified with any political party or organization, for he says—

"As in a clock various springs and wheels are necessary, some to give impetus and movement, others to check and regulate them that the harmony of the whole may lead to the desired end, so also in the wheel of human progress all spokes are necessary and unavoidable, all schools of thought serve a higher general purpose, and even what seem to us elements of destruction are undoubtedly destined to help in the building up of a new and better edifice of human institutions."

Prelooker not only professes but practises this all-embracing and all-forgiving philosophy, and now and again actually gives material help to those with whose ideas he does not agree, but whose honesty of conviction and devotion to their cause he considers deserving of sympathy and encouragement. We must, he says, first of all have men and women of firm principles,

with a faith and a social ideal, even if it is not our own; we must develop moral beings, conscientious citizens capable of self-sacrifice for what they themselves believe to be a righteous cause. It is the unprincipled or the indifferent ones who, in his opinion, are the worst members of the community and a drag upon human progress, for a great sinner is a potential great saint, but what can be expected from those whose only principle of thought and conduct is expresed in the words, "don't care!"

It would have been simply a miracle if Prelooker's path in England were strewn only with roses and not also with thorns. He had met, and is meeting, with plenty of bitter opposition and personal attack with that sort of calumny, which, being vague and impalpable, does the harm sure enough, but is impossible to grapple with, not lending itself to refutation and redress. As the irony of fate would have it, and as is the case in so many other causes, this campaign against our Reformer has been carried on not so much by outsiders, as by, so to say, members of his own household, the very people whose cause he is defending in England with so much devotion and ability, and whom he is helping not only with his pen, but with his purse as well.

It is the old, old story of misunderstandings, misrepresentations, doctrinaire, anti-dogmatic dogmatism and intolerance, practised by those very party leaders who shout the loudest against the intolerance and persecutions of others, and who claim a kind of monopoly in championing the cause of the Russian people. Prelooker is too independent in thought and action, and goes his own way, not asking any one's sanction, and thus not being hampered by "party" programmes, rules, resolutions, etc. Hence the opposition he meets with on the part of "our enemy the friend," who, in Prelooker's estimation, simply know not what they are doing.

"But," he says, "who has not had joys and sorrows, ups and downs, successes and disappointments! On the whole I have every reason to be thankful, and feel more keenly the sense of gratitude and indebtedness to numerous friends all over the country, who in various ways have shown me really brotherly and sisterly love, than the grief caused by the unmerited attacks of enemies. . . . In numerous places I enjoyed most warm-hearted hospitality and kindness, have been cheered and praised more than I really deserve, often accomplishing during one week, or even a single day, more things than a subject of the Czar could accomplish during a whole lifetime. . . . Of course, during all these years I have come to perceive and realize quite human contradictions in the English character, the imperfections of many a national institution, and the wrong of many a British law, especially in regard to the mothers of the nation; and yet, after all these years of searching, studying, critical observation and comparing, I can sincerely say of this country of my adoption in the words of her own native poet: 'England, England, with all thy faults I love thee still!'"

CHAPTER ONE

TRISHKA AND VASUITKA—TWO BROTHERS

A RUSSIAN CRIMINAL STORY

CHAPTER ONE

TRISHKA AND VASUITKA—TWO BROTHERS

A WEEK had not yet passed since the cobbler Kondrat and his family had come from some province to reside in Moscow, when he fell a victim to the typhus epidemic, which, as usual, made special havoc in the quarters inhabited by the poor. His wife was the only human being, besides the undertaker, who accompanied the dead man to the churchyard beyond the town, and on her way back she entered the first public-house she noticed, there to drown in a glass of vodka her affliction and despair in her great bereavement. And what other use, indeed, could she have made of the inheritance of two coppers left her by the deceased, which was just enough to get intoxicated on and thus forget, at least for some hours, the impending question: How to buy breakfast for her two children the next morning?

Whether Kondrat's wife entered the public-house from her old bad habit, or really seeking this time forgetfulness in her grief, nobody, not even she herself, could tell. On leaving the public-house she was able to move only some hundred yards,

when she fell on the snow a little way from the road, from which place she was removed only next morning, the intense frost during the night having deprived her for ever of both speech and breath.

Trishka and Vasuitka, the cobbler's two little boys, were thus at once left orphans and waifs. Nobody knew from whence their parents had come, and nobody cared to know. The slum, a cellar of which the cobbler occupied as his abode, was filled with numerous families belonging to "forsaken and lost humanity." Each of them had its own burden to bear, its own Trishkas and Vasuitkas, Palashkas and Mashkas to look after. So, when in the morning the hungry boys began to cry for father and mother, there was nobody to heed their voices except the old beggar-woman, Trapitchkina by nickname, whose own room in the same cellar was divided from that of the cobbler only by a thin wooden partition with holes here and there. Trapitchkina gave the children tea and bread, and as she had witnessed so many similar events, she left the children with no more thought about them, and hastened to her usual place near "The Bell of Ivan the Great," in expectation of passers-by for an early Mass. Usually she would not have returned until the afternoon, but a new thought flashed through her mind, and in less than half-an-hour she was home again, where immediately addressing Trishka, she said—

"Wilt thou go with me? I will buy thee a bulku."[1]

"I will, babusia,"[2] answered Trishka, unhesitatingly.

Vasuitka began to weep, asking her to take him out too. The old woman, after a short consideration, consented, and went out with both children.

Both boys had very sympathetic, innocent-looking faces. Trishka, the eldest, was just a little over seven years, Vasuitka not yet six. The younger would be the prettier but for a life-mark across his forehead from the right temple down to the left eye, occasioned by a knife-blow during a skirmish between his unfortunate parents. The old beggar put the boys one on each side of her, and the first début proved an enormous success. She returned home with a day's earnings, the amount of which she could not remember having ever received before.

Encouraged by the experiment, the old beggar took out the children next day again, with the same result. In the course of a few days, after some little instruction and training, Trapitchkina put the children in two separate places, she herself occupying a third point near them, watching their "work." This proved successful too, and Trishka and Vasuitka thus became professional little beggars

[1] Roll of white bread which is used by the majority of people as a dainty, the usual bread being of rye, black, sour, and often mixed with chaff and bark of trees.

[2] Grandmother, or good woman.

under the guidance of the old woman, who took away all their earnings for herself.

Both boys, however, did not remain long together.

One day a woman passing the street where Vasuitka was stationed, noticed the child, barefooted and shivering from the intense cold, piously crossed herself several times, and pronounced "Svataia Dieva Maria."[1] She took out her handkerchief, in one corner of which her money was tied up, and intended to give the child a kopeika,[2] but, after a moment's hesitation, took out two kopeikas, then again put them back, and took out a whole grivennik.[3] For a minute she stood pensively, then put back the grivennik and the handkerchief into her pocket, and asked Vasuitka to take her to his home. There she inquired from the neighbours about the child's parents and kindred, and having met with nothing but coarse answers, and ascertaining that he was a brodiaga,[4] took him away with her.

This woman was only a visitor in the city, a cook in the service of an old gentleman, who, with his only daughter, resided in the distant town of Kertch, and had come with her and his servant to see for the first time the ancient capital with her "forty times forty churches," as the popular belief runs in Russia.

[1] Holy Virgin Mary.
[2] A coin a little over a farthing.
[3] Threepence.
[4] Vagabond of unknown parentage.

The old gentleman and his daughter were exceedingly surprised and touched by the deed of their cook, and the simple story she told them, how masses of people passed by the poor orphan indifferently, and how she suddenly was inspired to take him home and adopt him as her own child. They both approved of and praised her conduct, and before leaving Moscow they tried to find some document as to the identity of the child, but in vain. This, however, did not matter much, and the little party soon returned home, happy with the new addition to their family.

Vasuitka at first was quite at sea as to what had happened to him, and looked wildly and with fear at his new surroundings; but meeting with kindness and caresses from all, he soon became confident, and affectionately attached to his benefactors and their friends. In the course of one year he became unrecognizable. Intelligent, bright, frank, good-natured, the child was now a general favourite and pet. The old gentleman, who was a Dvorianin[1] by origin and position, became so enamoured of the foundling that he proposed to the cook to adopt him as his own child, as this would give him several privileges in entering a Government college, and in his after career. The good woman gladly consented to her master's proposal, and the waif of Moscow streets was thus, before long, registered at the Royal

[1] A nobleman.

Gymnasium, under his new full name as Vassili Stepanovitch Dobroluboff.

Another fate, alas! awaited poor Trishka. On returning home Trapitchkina and Trishka learned that a certain woman, who called herself Efrosinia, had inquired about Vasuitka's parentage and taken him away somewhere. Trishka was struck with grief about his brother, and the name Efrosinia became deeply engraved in his memory in connection with his disappearance. He believed that Vasuitka had been taken away to be sold to the Turks, who would kill him and boil his flesh, nails, and hair for purposes of sorcery. During the night his imagination pictured other terrible scenes of the torture of his brother, but his dreams were interrupted by his mistress, who awakened him the next morning earlier than usual in order to give him special instructions for the day. He was commanded to do his best and bring home a double sum, both for himself and for his wicked brother. That day Trishka was particularly importunate with the passers-by, but in the evening his money was even less than usual. Trapitchkina threatened to shut him up for the night in a hole at the back of the cellar, where the mice would bite him, if he did not improve next time. Trishka struggled on as best he could, until one day, fearing to return home with his miserable earnings, he wandered through the streets till late at night, not knowing what to

do with himself. Finally a policeman sent him to a shelter where everybody was admitted for only a kopeika per night. Here Trishka learned at once that he could be his own master, and returned no more to the old beggar-woman.

Thus our little hero began to live an independent life, and for some time matters went on pretty tolerably. But one evening, after having been exposed the whole day to rain and wind, Trishka returned to the shelter with a terrible headache, and shivering from fever. The next morning he was unable to raise his head, and the keeper allowed him to stay for some hours. In the afternoon he felt a little better, and went out to get a few coppers to buy food and to pay for the coming night. The weather was severe; a snowstorm raged all around, and passers-by were very few. Hungry Trishka began to run some distance after those who happened to pass, but nobody paid any attention to his entreaties. Some apparently intended to give something to the beggar, but felt rather lazy and unwilling to unbutton their shubas,[1] and they too passed on their way without giving him anything. Tears filled the eyes of poor Trishka, and he pitiably looked on all sides for help, but in vain. The twilight approached, and he had not yet even one kopeika for food or night shelter. A woman came out of a shop, and from her muff a purse slipped

[1] Fur coats.

out and fell silently in the snow. Trishka noticed this, and his heart began to beat terribly in his breast. The woman hurried away. Trishka picked up the purse and ran off in another direction.

In the purse there were ten roubles in paper, apart from some silver and copper coins. Trishka bought some cloth and a pair of boots and feasted the whole week with comrades of the profession. The money, however, soon ended, and Trishka again appeared on the streets, but with a new appetite, unknown before, to pounce all at once upon a big sum. In a few days a favourable opportunity presented itself to carry off a parcel from a carriage, and Trishka for the first time consciously and deliberately committed a theft.

At the fourth theft he was caught, brought before a magistrate, and—oh! the cruel irony of fate!—just on the very day when his brother Vasuitka, in another town, was beaming with joy in his new uniform, and started for the first time for the Government School, accompanied with the blessings and good wishes of his friends, Trishka was conducted for the first time, with curses and kicks, to the gloomy cells of the town prison.

* * * * * *

A long time has elapsed since the beginning of our story, such a long time that scarcely more than dry bones remain in the graves of the good cook Efrosinia and of her master and mistress. Vasuitka,

or, as his present appellation runs, Vassili Stepanovitch Dobroluboff, has long ago passed his University examinations and begun a brilliant career in the legal profession. He became a wonderful man, the protector of the weak and the degraded, the friend and counsellor of all the afflicted, and many philanthropic institutions owed their origin and flourishing state to his indefatigable efforts. Never had he forgotten his dark origin, and deeply in the shrine of his heart has he preserved the image of her, whose deed never reached publicity, but which is nevertheless inscribed with golden letters in the book of Him who said: "Whosoever receiveth one of these little ones, receiveth Me." Dobroluboff remembered well his elder brother Trishka; but was he alive, or what had become of him? no one could answer these tormenting questions. In the few hours left him after his various occupations Dobroluboff often indulged in looking backward into the hazy distance of his early childhood, and over and over again he felt himself strengthened in his resolution to press on in his self-denying labours for the rescue of suffering humanity.

During one of these deep meditations Dobroluboff felt particularly sad and low-spirited. An unaccountable anxiety pressed on his mind and heart, and he could find no relief. For the next day was appointed the hearing of the sensational case of the famous gang of robbers and murderers, who had for

a long time made havoc and devastated whole districts. Dobroluboff had to act in this case for the first time in his new capacity as President of the High Court, on whom the direction and issue of the whole process depends, the majority of the jury being but illiterate men. He thought of the new victims of imperfect human life and its institutions, who would appear to-morrow to receive sentence from the same imperfect human justice. In spite of his long experience as a judge, Dobroluboff could not accustom himself to the usual coolness, sometimes even indifference, of most of his profession, and each time before the sitting of the Court he felt agitated, and in the depth of his heart asked himself, by what right he was authorized to judge and condemn his unfortunate fellow-men? But this evening, while sitting in his arm-chair and thinking of to-morrow's case, his excitement and agitation were so inexplicably overwhelming, that he several times was compelled to open the window into his garden and inhale a few breaths of fresh air. During the night his sleep was disturbed by different visions, and once he awakened with a loud outcry—"Oh! my poor unfortunate brother!"

The vast hall of the provincial High Court was crowded with people of both sexes. The judges and jury already occupied their places and waited for the orders of the President. Dobroluboff's face, after the sleepless night, looked tired, with an

expression of fear in the eyes. The gash along his forehead from the right temple to the left eye had not only not disappeared, but was even more intensely marked as years went on, attracting at once the attention of the onlooker. Still, there was about the physiognomy of the President that rare beauty which is peculiar only to those to whom "the suffering of the race" is a reality, and in the redressing of which all their thoughts and dreams are absorbed.

Dobroluboff looked over some papers, asked some formal questions of the elder of the jurymen, and then gave orders to bring in the prisoners.

Of the latter there were four, and among them the hetman of the gang, known by the nickname "Nikita Likhatch Kamenoserdtse."[1] All eyes were directed on this man, who was the terror of all peaceable people, and who for many years had escaped the pursuit of the authorities. He looked a fellow nearly fifty, squab, with a red beard and a face that scarcely suggested the image and likeness of his Creator. His eyes wandered, directed now on the public, now on the jurymen, and some shuddered as they felt his looks fixed on them. The President addressed him first, with the usual formal question—

"Prisoner, what is your name and class?"

The prisoner directed his eyes towards the Presi-

[1] "Nikita, the Brave, of the Stony Heart."

dent, and was silent, looking now straight into his eyes, now on the gash across his forehead. It seemed as if a tetanus had befallen the prisoner and deprived him of his speech. The President could not stand the fixed eye of the prisoner, and with his own lowered he repeated the question.

About a minute passed amidst deepest silence in the house, when the prisoner, with a wild expression, suddenly shouted out: "Vasuitka, my dear, darling brother!—Efrosinia!" whereupon with indescribable wild sobs, which filled the whole house with consternation, he stretched out his arms towards the President and made an effort to get free. The latter grew pale as death, and with a groan exclaiming, "Trishka! oh, God help us!" he fell back in his chair and fainted.

The hearing of the case was postponed and transmitted to another court. Dobroluboff resigned his office and entered the corporation of advocates, in order to be able personally to lead the defence of his brother. He was perfectly aware that all the chances were on the side of the prosecution, that no arguments, however true, just, logical, and eloquent, could save the accused. He wished, nevertheless, to defend, not only his own brother, the murderer Trishka, before the law, but also his fellow-man, in the noblest sense of the word, before a guilty society. He could have spoken on the subject for hours, but he contented himself with the

following brief address, which took up scarcely more than ten minutes.

"Gentlemen of the Jury," Dobroluboff began, "an extraordinary case is before you. It is extraordinary, not only in itself, but because of some accidental circumstances accompanying it. Before you stand two brothers. One of them, in the capacity of a criminal, stands there behind the iron grate, in chains and guarded by two armed soldiers. The other, in the capacity of the defender, stands here free, and nobody thinks to watch him or to lay hold on his personal liberty. One brother—pardon my saying this—enjoys universal esteem and love, the gratitude of hundreds benefited by his labours; he is sowing around himself, wherever possible, the seeds of good and love, and he receives in recognition the confidence and affection of all. The other brother is an outcast of humanity, he is a thief and a murderer, he meets only with curses and anathemas. His name is pronounced with terror and a shudder. He is the enemy of all, and all are his enemies. What, then, is it that planted in the heart of one goodness, love, and life, and in that of the other hatred, death, and destruction?

"We are both children of the same father and mother. We both, while together as little boys, had no knowledge of what is good and what is evil; we were taught nothing, and had but very faint ideas of God and faith. My brother was not worse than

I, and I was not better than he. But early in life we became orphans, and hunger drove us both to the streets and left us to the mercy and love of men. To me such love was shown; a simple, good woman saved me, other good people educated me and trained me for good, and I became what I am. I am repaying now love for love; I return to society the good I owe to it. But my unfortunate brother has experienced none of these humanizing influences which fell to my lot. This apparently heartless murderer whose hands are stained with the blood of so many victims, possessed sufficient human sentiment and memory to describe to me, with heart-rending tears of repentance and despair, the moment of his first fall and sin. Sick, hungry, and freezing, he stood amidst the snowstorm and the gathering darkness imploring in vain for mercy and shelter. People passed him by indifferently. No hand of help was stretched out to the wretched child. Accident presented to him a great temptation. A woman, warmly clad and laden with provisions, dropped her heavy purse on the snow and hurried away. He not having even a kopeika to pay for his night shelter pounced upon the find. The first step —I leave it to you to call this step false or dishonest —was made, and he fell, without the knowledge that he had fallen. On the contrary, he believed that Heaven itself had paid heed to his cry of misery, and, in opposition to human cruelty and neglect,

had sent the woman with her purse. After this first fall, all the rest followed with the iron logic of fate and circumstance, that will ever accompany the eternal struggle between the house of 'Want' and the house of 'Have.' Who knows? Perhaps the pitiless arm of my brother struck the children, brothers, or sisters of the very people who were so cruel towards him at that age, when he still possessed a pure childish soul, an unstained human heart. What right, then, have these men to require of him love and mercy, when they themselves, and society in general, have shown no love and mercy to him? Who knows? Perhaps if the good woman who saved me had noticed him first, I might now have occupied his place in this court, and he mine. If a thief and a murderer is characterized first of all by his care for himself and the absence of any consideration for the welfare and comfort of his neighbour; if a murderer is distinguished in the first place by the absence of sensitiveness to the suffering and entreaties of his victims; if the first murderer of his brother fully gave his own characteristic in the words, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' then are not these same features essentially characteristic of those millions of men who, though not directly killing their neighbours, are nevertheless as cruel and indifferent to the sufferings, anguish, and pain of others?

"Gentlemen of the Jury! The story of my

brother's fall is, at the same time, the story of the fall of the three other accused, and of thousands like them, though, it may be, containing other details and episodes. Call them simply villains, or thieves or murderers, all the same they are the victims of human cruelty and indifference, and as long as love and compassion are not the chief controllers in human relations, and society does not rise to active and resolute steps in helping the lost and the disinherited portion of humanity, there will be no end to vice and crime. The accused, whom I defend, have without doubt killed and ruined many lives; but they themselves have first of all been ruined by the barbarity of society. Why, then, will you condemn and punish only the unfortunate who stand there in chains and guarded, and leave unpunished those who killed them morally?

"Gentlemen of the Jury! I do not require from you to acquit my brother and his accomplices, but I do request you to judge all those who are murderers in spirit; all those who, without love and compassion, pass by with callous indifference their suffering fellow-creatures abandoned and forsaken at the very threshold of their lives. I require from you to demand that the State should take up, above all things, the cause of the forlorn little ones, and compel its citizens to an act of duty and humanity which the poor, good woman who saved me, accomplished from the impulse of her own generous heart.

If, however, you, Gentlemen of the Jury, are unable to change and reform society at large; if this is beyond your authority and power, then at least be merciful yourselves, acquit the accused, and pass a sentence by which society, for having neglected their existence and education in their childhood, should now be made to provide them with means of labour, giving them the possibility of an honest life. That is all that I have to say."

Trishka and his accomplices were condemned to be hanged. Crowds of people gathered around the scaffold to enjoy the terrible scene. When all was over, a gentleman, returning home with a lady on his arm, was accosted by a tiny creature, begging. The gentleman threw an angry look at him and shouted, "Get out!" and turning to his companion, indignantly remarked: "This scoundrel ought to have been dispatched, too, along with the four. All the same, sooner or later, he will come to the scaffold."

CHAPTER TWO

WHY COUNT VASSILI DANILOVITCH STROGANOFF BECAME A REVOLUTIONIST

[*To face p.* 77

THE EXECUTION OF SOPHIE PEROVSKAYA:
CARTOON ISSUED BY RUSSIAN WOMEN SUFFRAGISTS

"If my sex does not disqualify me from mounting the Scaffold, why should it disqualify me from entering Parliament?"

(*See p.* 121)

CHAPTER TWO

WHY COUNT VASSILI DANILOVITCH STROGANOFF BECAME A REVOLUTIONIST

Of all the extraordinary characters and thrilling episodes produced by the Russian Revolutionary Movement, I really know of no others more engrossing, romantic and deeply instructive withal than the character and career of the subject of this sketch—and I have been for nearly thirty-five years a close student of and writer on Russian political history. For the rest, as the story is given here with some details, the reader can easily form his own opinion as to whether my admiration, nay, affection, for the revolutionary Russian Count are fully justified.

Before, however, I proceed farther, I wish to be quite frank with my readers, and, as the phrase goes, take them into my confidence. Well, in the first place, Count "Stroganoff" is not the real name of my hero, who does not wish, at the present juncture, to subject his family, so illustrious in Russian history, to the glaring light of publicity. Secondly, his story was told to an English friend, a venerable political leader in a high position, who, too, objects to any publicity being given to his

intimacy with the Russian revolutionist. I therefore avow that the "Mr. Ambrose" of my story is also a fictitious name, which fact, of course, does not in the least affect the story itself. And lastly, I wish to explain that I was one of the very few men invited to the small "bachelors'" dinner-party in the Englishman's house where the story was told by the Count, I myself taking copious notes of it, whilst the others sipped their coffee or puffed at their cigars, listening all the time in intent silence, our host alone breaking in now and then with various remarks.

Of course, the Count spoke all the time with great earnestness, occasionally gesticulating with force and enthusiasm, as if he were reciting a tragic poem from a public platform. Nevertheless one felt that his narrative was but a natural and spontaneous outpouring of his heart, without any previous preparation. Listening to him, one seemed to begin to understand and solve the psychological problem so puzzling to many, viz. what makes Russian aristocrats, basking in the sunshine of a throne, come down from the top of the social ladder to the bottom, and voluntarily submit to hardships, privations, and frequently even martyrdom. The Englishmen's faces bore throughout his lengthy narrative an expression of bewilderment, but I remained almost unmoved, simply because nearly all the facts and incidents described were quite familiar to me, as,

separately, they are not rare occurrences in Russia. The wonder is only that all these romantic and tragic episodes should have happened in the life of a single individual, but then it is exactly just this wonderful chain of happenings which made Count Stroganoff what he is, a hero-reformer for whom, I am sure, all lovers of humanity and progress will thank Providence.

My hero, then, is alone responsible for all the details of his stirring story, the veracity of which none of those present had any reason to doubt, though the hypercritical reader may still sceptically utter to himself the French saying—

"S'il n'est pas vrai il est bien inventé."

To our story, then, with open mind and without prejudice, if this is possible.

Count Stroganoff's Education and Early Career.

"I believe you, Mr. Ambrose," began Count Stroganoff, "know well enough that my family was, and indeed still is, one of the richest in Russia, possessing immense tracts of land and formerly thousands of serfs. I was brought up, of course, in the Greek Orthodox Church; that is to say, was taught to worship God, Christ, and their anointed one on earth, the Czar, of whatever character the latter might be.

"About the age of twelve or so, the fear of God

began gradually to disappear from my mind and conscience, because of the great contempt which existed all around me for our priesthood and their doings.

"My father always called the priest of the parish on our estate by the derisive nickname 'Popka,' by which one of our little dogs was known. This he did not only in the priest's absence, but straight to his face, in reply to which the priest used only to smile obsequiously and say, 'Izvolite shootit, Vashe Prevoskhoditelstvo,' which means, 'Your Excellency condescends to joke.'

"My parents used to go to church, but it soon became clear to me that they did so as a tiresome but unavoidable duty, though as a boy I could not comprehend what reasons they had in making such efforts. Under such circumstances, which I shall not describe in detail, God and Christ became to me two empty words, two meaningless abstractions. As I got no satisfactory and enlightening replies to some questions which troubled my mind in early boyhood, I finished by putting them all aside and turning my attention exclusively to the *Corps de Pages* in St. Petersburg, where I was soon to be sent to commence my military education.

"In that military college I at once found myself in what I would briefly term 'a jolly company' of cadets attired in military uniforms. I was soon filled with the consciousness of my own importance and

with contempt for all mortals not in military uniforms. The traditional code of honour which had established itself among the cadets was to treat one another to various bacchanalias while on leave in the town, and I had just passed fifteen when I first fell as a man. The hero amongst us was he who could boast of the largest number of *liaisons*, especially with married women; and not to get into large debts every year to various restaurant keepers and agents of ill-fame was decidedly to discredit oneself as being of a poor, unworthy family, to incur the contempt of the honourable company of the youthful miscreants, and be virtually excluded from their midst. For the *Corps de Pages* admit only the sons of the highest Russian aristocracy, and a wilful waste of money was the chief sign of really high birth and distinction.

"Our College was a real hot-bed of certain Oriental practices, which are widely spread all over Russia, even among the so-called 'Black' or Celibate Clergy, as has been brought to light by many trial cases, but I would rather refer you for more information on this painful subject to the article on 'Sexual Morality in Russia' which not long ago appeared in your English widespread magazine, *The Fortnightly Review*, under the signature of E. B. Lanin.

"On my first return home from the College for the summer holidays, I carried on the debauches

of the capital amidst the peasant girls on our estate. They were serfs, and I believed it to be my right to deal with them as I pleased. I learned that my parents knew well enough about my 'adventures,' but they never said a word to me. The whole moral atmosphere around them, and the prevailing society notions and habits, were such as quite to encourage 'a young man' to be 'a young man.' My conduct was the general conduct of the Emperor himself, the grand dukes, princes and noblemen, and I should have been only laughed at had I suddenly made a stand for purity and pity for the victims.

"Now, to cut the story short, at the age of eighteen I became an officer, and got a commission in one of the Russian crack regiments. Soon I took part in an action against the enemy in the Caucasus, and distinguished myself by burning a number of villages, shooting and hanging a number of natives, and bringing with me to St. Petersburg two prisoners of war in the persons of two young Caucasian girls, the greatest beauties I saw among their tribeswomen. The whole capital talked about them, and about the establishment I fitted up for them, living there myself openly, like a pasha in his harem. They, however, did not live long, which was not to be wondered at. Their lofty mountains and mild winters in the sunny south contrasted only too strongly with the marshes of the Neva and the

severe cold of the north, and they withered away like flowers transplanted to a foreign soil.

"I forgot to tell you that my father was at that time a general in the army, and took part in the same campaign. The result of this campaign to our family was an additional estate in the Caucasus, which the Emperor himself graciously granted us as an acknowledgment of the great services of my father and myself.

"My career was thus already a brilliant one, and my prospects in the future were brighter still. Then came the Polish insurrection, and subsequently an incident happened which made me what I am now.

"I was attached to the Commander-in-Chief of the army for the suppression of the rebellion, and we hanged, shot and mutilated the bravest and noblest sons and daughters of Poland in their thousands. The executions were frequently a real savage butchery, the soldiers beating to death the captured revolutionists, simply with the object of robbing them of their valuables. This was, indeed, a common occurrence, in many cases due simply to the brutalization of the soldiers by a practically unlimited allowance of vodka. But you, Mr. Ambrose, may not know exactly what our famous *vodka* is?"

"No, indeed I don't. Sometimes I meet with the word in papers or in a book, and have always thought it is a kind of English gin."

"Yes, but more nasty, more intoxicating, though at the same time very much inferior in quality to your English beverage. Now, Mr. Ambrose, you may think I'm joking, but I assure you, in all earnestness, that the main secret of the Czar's autocratic power and of the subjection and slavery of the whole Russian nation lies in the use of this abominable liquid—vodka. It is practically a poison, killing the people, not at once, but by a slow process. It kills, anyhow, their thinking faculties and their energies, making their movements sluggish, with a general tendency to laziness as its after effect. The Government has long since appreciated the value of the national vodka as a preventive antidote to any initiative of a rebellious spirit, and has always put down any serious temperance movement started by friends of the people's progress. Besides, more than a third of the Imperial revenue is derived from the sale of intoxicating liquors, so you will understand that vodka is the chief factor in maintaining the throne both politically and financially.

"Within the last few years, the Government has made the boldest stroke of business any despotism has ever ventured on. It has taken over the whole monopoly of the liquor traffic, raised the public-house to the standard of a State institution, and the barmen and barwomen to the rank of Government officials, with good salaries and certain other privi-

leges, so much so that numerous poorly-paid schoolmasters and mistresses have changed their positions for those of managers or sellers of Government vodka. Naturally all this is suffocating whatever attempts there are to spread among the people habits of temperance and moderation."

"You don't mean to say so!" exclaimed Mr. Ambrose, looking at his companion with an expression of incredulity in his eyes.

"Unfortunately it is so, and I could show you a list of temperance publications which only a short time ago were forbidden in Russia, though they had been already purged by the preliminary censorship of *dangerous* passages, and had for some time been permitted to circulate. But I must proceed with my own story and hurry on with all the preliminary events which led to the great change in my life.

"After the blood-curdling horrors of the Polish massacres, I took leave for a year to repose on the laurels of a patriot and hero, which were graciously bestowed on me by the Emperor in the shape of decorations 'for exquisite services to the Throne and the Fatherland.' I settled down for a short time on our estate, and naturally became the centre of attraction for all the nobility around us. It became known that I should be shortly attached to the Emperor's personal suite, and great and small, old and young, began to cringe before me,

considering themselves highly honoured if I condescended to say a word or two to them."

A Night of Orgies and Horrors.

"A large landowner and millionaire in our neighbourhood, of the 'parvenu' class, conceived the idea of giving a ball in my honour. I should probably have declined with contempt to mix with *that* class, but was told that he had a most beautiful young wife, which circumstance turned the scale at once in his favour, as I was pretty sure of adding a new conquest to my other victories. The ball was truly sumptuous; the choicest wines and tropical fruits were abundant, in spite of Russia's famous mid-winter season with a temperature about 35° below zero. My host had his own orchestra, and had engaged for the occasion a ballet girl, a famous beauty, treating us to a repetition of a scene which had taken place a couple of years before at a grand duke's orgy in St. Petersburg, and was afterwards fully described in a Russian novel sanctioned by the censorship and still freely and widely circulating in Russia. But really it may shock you, Mr. Ambrose, to learn what that shameless scene was——"

Count Stroganoff looked at our host interrogatively, and the latter replied—

"If it is true, let me hear it, by all means."

"True? Why, please understand that everything I am telling you about Russia is perfectly true, to the best of my knowledge and personal experience. though I cannot quite vouch for some little details, speaking from memory. Some of the noble gentlemen who witnessed the scene at the grand duke's orgy were my personal friends, I am ashamed now to say, and all St. Petersburg talked at the time of the scandal, but I was not then in the capital, and only heard the whole story. Evidently it circulated widely even in the provinces, for my host on the night I am describing repeated the scene exactly as immortalized in the novel mentioned. Well, it was simply this. At the end of the supper, the head waiter announced that the gentlemen would have dessert and café separately, and we were invited to another spacious room. We smoked, drank and chatted merrily, passing various remarks on the ladies, when the same waiter appeared, and loudly, with a slight smile on his face, said—

"'Your honours, dessert is now coming.'

Thereupon he drew aside the curtains which concealed an adjacent apartment, and our amazed gaze beheld four lackeys in full uniform carrying in on an immense gold or gilt tray the absolutely nude form of the ballet girl, ornamented with garlands of roses and other flowers, and surrounded by various sweets, ices, cakes and fruit. Several electric lights were skilfully placed on various parts

of the girl's body, heightening the brilliancy of the jewels with which she was bedecked, the whole picture being one to defy the most depraved imagination of the greatest libertine. Certainly ancient Babylon could have invented nothing of the kind, seeing that, anyhow, the magic effect of electric lights was wanting in those times.

"For a moment every one in the room seemed to be paralyzed with amazement, then a frantic applause broke out on all sides, as a madness of passion seized them all. I sometimes think the whole scene might have been only an hallucination born in a brain overheated with wine and liquors; but no, it was a reality, a fact, and all the actors in this infamy called themselves Christians, some of them, like myself, occupying responsible positions, and even dispensing laws and being guardians of public morality. However, at the time, I could not see this abomination in its true light, but Nemesis was awaiting that night at our very door, in the literal sense of the word, though—oh, the irony of fate!—her retribution fell upon utterly innocent people, and made them the victims of our iniquities, and at the same time the means of my personal awakening from the depths of human degradation.

"The sledges were ordered for our return at four o'clock in the morning, but, heated by wine, dancing, the bacchanalian scene, and the intrigue with the beautiful hostess, I continued to stay on, not notic-

ing how the hours had run by. As I was the lion of the ball, naturally nobody else cared to leave before me, and the whole company continued to enjoy themselves. Finally I wanted to start, and after the usual parting ceremonies and bustle, made myself comfortable in my covered sledge, which stood before the door. 'Ready,' shouted my host's servant to my driver, Vasya. But Vasya showed no sign of having heard the order. The latter was repeated in a louder voice, but still no answer from Vasya. My host then, who saw me to the sledge and was awaiting my departure, shouted, 'Oglokh tyi Swinya?' ('Hast thou become deaf, thou swine?'). But the 'swine' still did not answer, and on being finally shaken was found to be frozen to death, presenting a numb mass as hard and immovable as a stone. The whole scene is as fresh to me as if it had happened only yesterday. I noticed some commotion, and, opening the window, was told that my driver was 'very drunk,' and that another one would immediately take his place. Now, my Vasya was quite an exception among our servants, and was practically a total abstainer and vegetarian, belonging secretly to that gentle and noble section of Russian Dissenters known under the name of 'Molocane,' or Milk-drinkers. We knew that several of our other servants belonged to various Nonconformist religious bodies, but we did not mind that in the least, as they were invariably

more honest, faithful, industrious, clean, and, above all, more sober than those who belonged to the Established Church. To hear all of a sudden that Vasya was 'very drunk' made me partly laugh and partly indignant, and feeling that something must be the matter, anyhow, I at once jumped out of the sledge, only to discover that my driver was a corpse, frozen to death during the couple of hours after four o'clock in the morning whilst he had to sit quietly holding the reins of the horses, and expecting every moment my appearance. At first, no great fuss was made about the occurrence, which is no novelty in Russia, but it was immediately found that no fewer than five other drivers had found their death in the same way, the frost during the night having been an exceptionally severe one, and they having been ordered to be ready at four o'clock, and the clock having now struck six. We were all naturally upset and alarmed, but what was to be done? Our host was more occupied with finding other drivers for his guests than with the corpses of the dead men, and assured me that we need not trouble about the matter, as he would see to all arrangements, etc. As, indeed, my staying on would have been of no use to the dead men, I soon left, my host apologizing to me again and again for my discomfiture, and repeating the usual consolatory formula, 'Bozhya Volya' ('It is God's will').

"Fatigued as I was by the dancing and feasting

of a whole night, and heavy as my head was after much drinking and smoking, I still possessed sense enough to realize our own heartlessness, guilt and responsibility for the death of these our victims. So when our host, in a tone almost of indifference, pronounced his blasphemy and cited 'God's will' as the cause of the freezing to death of six innocent human beings, I could scarcely control my rage, and my fist was already clenched to give him a blow in the face. But suddenly the thought flashed through my mind that somebody else might indeed slap my face, for I was equally guilty, indeed, more so. The men were freezing to death just whilst I was speaking sweet nothings to my beautiful hostess. By nature I was kind-hearted and sympathetic with suffering, but my whole environment was so corrupt and rotten that I had failed all the time to realize the depth of my own moral degradation and cruelty towards others. The catastrophe of that horrible night, however, awakened all the nobler instincts in me, and an added horror that same morning brought me to a final and decisive crisis.

"We were about half-way to our house, when one of the most enchanting of Russian winter auroras began to break over the crisp snow of the fine pine wood which we were crossing. For a moment my dark thoughts and some forebodings of evil in the future yielded to a more serene mood, as I eagerly stretched forward to contemplate the sublime and mysterious birth of a new day. There was

something divinely soothing and uplifting in that wonderful glow which gently spread its rays from the eastern sky, pushing back the shadows of the night and calling forth to life a slumbering nature. Suddenly the horses stopped, and the driver, opening the little window of the sledge, said to me—

"'There is somebody lying on the road, sir. Should we stop?'

"'Stop, stop!' I cried loudly in a wild voice, awakening from the poetical reverie in which I had just been indulging. I jumped out of the sledge and ran a few paces forward, where a dark mass was lying in the snow. It was apparently a woman. She feebly groaned, but did not move. For a minute or so I stood bewildered, not knowing what to do. Then I called the driver to come down. 'She is freezing; we must try to rub her with snow,' he said. I agreed, and sent him to fetch the felt and a travelling rug from the sledge. These we placed beside the woman, and together we removed her to them. But imagine my indescribable horror when we discovered a new-born babe left on the spot where the woman was lying! The babe, of course, was a frozen little corpse, and at the moment we could not, naturally, occupy ourselves with the question whether it had been born alive or not. The driver reverently took off his hat, made the sign of the cross on his forehead and chest, and pronounced, 'Hospódi, pomilui nas gryeshnikh!' which means,

'Lord have mercy upon us, sinners,' Though I had long since forgotten to pray and to invoke the name of God, at this moment I felt all my human degradation and wickedness, and impelled by a power stronger than mine, I followed the example of the driver, took off my hat, and silently prayed for forgiveness, as I have never prayed before in my life. The scene, as I recall it now, was probably unequalled in its solemnity and pathos. Imagine a thick Russian pine wood in mid-winter clad in its white attire of snow; a glorious breaking of the morning aurora through the forest, illuminating two men with uncovered heads praying over a frozen child and its half-frozen mother. The scene lasted only a couple of moments, though, for there was no time to be lost in saving the mother. We took off our gloves and began to rub her with snow. The upper part of her body was quite warm, but the limbs were cold and numbed. After several minutes of gentle rubbing we felt as if they were beginning to revive, but the frost was so severe that our own hands got stiff, and we could do nothing on the spot. We then carried the woman, with the child, into the sledge, and I gave orders to drive at the quickest speed possible to a village about five miles distant, where lived a feldsher, a kind of medical assistant.

"Strange as it may seem to you, Mr. Ambrose, I, the hero of war and bloodshed, who had seen thousands of mutilated human bodies, and was

accustomed to hear the most awful, agonizing cries of victims in the pangs of death, I could not stand the groans of the unknown woman in my sledge, and I wept bitterly like a child, all the time an inner voice unaccountably telling me that I was responsible for the death of the babe and the sufferings of the mother. To see death on the battle-field was quite a different thing. There, the more human beings were slaughtered of our own people and especially of the enemy, the more I and my comrades felt our importance and greatness as heroes, the more, indeed, was our satisfaction and pride at having fulfilled our duties. But the horror of the six frozen men left behind, and now the tragedy of this mother and child, seemed crying to me aloud, 'Cain, Cain, thou art the murderer of thy brothers!' And each continued groan of the woman only repeated the same words, 'Cain, Cain!' My head was hot with fever, and I really felt I was becoming delirious myself, when at last the sledge stopped before the cottage of the feldsher."

The Count remained silent for a couple of minutes. We all, who had listened all the time to the story with ever-increasing horror, could find nothing to say, and remained silent too. The Count took a deep breath and continued—

"To cut the story short, owing to the efforts of the feldsher, who was quite accustomed to such cases, the woman at last revived, and was able to

tell who she was and how she came to be in the wood. Her name was Matrena, the wife of Nikita Polikarpoff, of the neighbouring village, Rodionovka. Her husband had been aching and ill ever since his return from the Polish campaign, but last evening his cough increased and his breath got shorter than ever. She sat up with him till about four in the morning, but he got worse, and she thought his last moments were approaching. She then, though expecting to be shortly confined, started at that hour for the doctor to get at least some medicine from him, not daring to ask him to visit the patient personally. On the road through the wood she heard, or imagined she heard, the howling of wolves, became terrified, and did not remember what followed afterwards.

"While she was telling her story, I was listening with a face more and more burning with shame. Matrena and Nikita Polikarpoff were both formerly our serfs, and if I had forgotten her among my numerous other adventures, she surely could not have forgotten me.

"As to Nikita Polikarpoff, he married Matrena by the order of my mother for a good reason, but they, nevertheless, became fond of one another, and after their emancipation settled in another village. From her story I had just learned that he was taken as a soldier and served in the Polish campaign, very likely among the troops under my own

command. So while I was decorated by the Emperor and fêted by private parties for my great achievements, poor Nikita was dying alone, his wife half frozen, and his child quite frozen to death in the midst of a winter night in a wood!

"Matrena was looking at me, apparently not recognizing me, but every one of her glances shot through my heart and conscience like a poisoned arrow. I am a brute and a murderer, shouted in my ear a mysterious voice within me; all of us, Emperor, princes, dukes, generals, brave and heroic officers, all are but brutes and murderers, Cains who slay their brothers, and yet claim rewards and honours for their misdeeds. How these ideas came suddenly upon me with crushing weight whilst Matrena was relating her short story of woe and misery, I cannot tell. But the light dawned upon me from that very morning, and I decided to follow the new call for a better and nobler life.

"Matrena was soon removed to her home, if a wretched shed of logs unfit for human habitation may be called by that cheering name 'home.' We found Nikita dead, and two emaciated children cowering amidst rags and shivering with cold. I did my best to secure for Matrena medical attendance and other help, and returned home only towards evening, exhausted physically and morally, and feeling sure that the events of the last twenty-four hours had formed a turning-point in my whole

career. Matrena told me that her husband began to complain of pain in his back after a night spent in the open on one of the Polish marshes, that he had received a copper and silver medal for bravery, and double quarterly wages, that is, five shillings for three months, instead of the ordinary half-crown, with which to go home to recover his health and wait until he should be called again to active service."

"Did you say that five shillings for three months was the double wages of that soldier?" asked Mr. Ambrose, though the Count stated so quite clearly.

"Yes, the ordinary soldier receives forty-three kopecks every two months, which is, in English money, about eightpence-halfpenny. In war time the wages are increased for those who are actually on the battle-field, and it was thus that Nikita received a whole half-crown every three months while he took part in the Polish campaign. To give him half-a-crown extra to go home and cure the consumption he had contracted during that campaign was a sure sign that the authorities particularly appreciated his service and good conduct."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Mr. Ambrose, not finding any other commentary on what he had just heard.

"Ah! Mr. Ambrose, you begin at last to realize the extent of Russian iniquity. You, as an Englishman, are easily struck by the reward *generously*

given to the Russian soldier, who had to forsake his own dear ones and perish himself in order to procure new estates for the Emperor and his hirelings. I, as a Russian, did not until that memorable night, see any wrong in the relations between our people and our Government. Everything seemed to me all right; indeed, I frequently even thought the people ungrateful for the various efforts the Government constantly made for their welfare and prosperity, though I never took the trouble to try to understand exactly what these efforts were and *how* the Government sought to benefit the people. There was a general belief in me, as in all the ruling class, that we were the best friends of the people, and understood what is good for them better than they did themselves; that they, the people, owing to their ignorance and low moral standard, were always our enemies and would rise against us, if we did not take precious care to control their whole life, to forbid all their gatherings and inter-communications, to prevent any outside influence penetrating into their midst, and generally to watch them as one watches the movement of a vicious dog. Indeed, I honestly believed that to take away some rough, ignorant fellow from his dirty hovel and place him in a clean military barrack, to feed and clothe him, to train him in better manners and discipline, to teach him the art of using a rifle and bayonet, and, besides, to give him every two months some forty

kopecks in cash for tobacco and drink—yes, to do all this for him, and to demand from him in return *only* faithfulness and devotion in case of war against the enemies of our common dear fatherland, or in case of arbitrary strikes of greedy and lazy workmen against their lawful employers, all this I fully believed was exceedingly kind and generous on our part, for which the soldier and his family ought to feel deeply thankful. However, the frozen men, Nikita's death, his frozen newly-born child, Matrena's condition, and the whole picture of misery I beheld on entering their wretched hovel, upset all my previous notions, and for the first time a new light was thrown upon the darkness of my soul. I asked myself, what has Nikita gained by participating in the bloody horrors which characterized the suppression of the noblest aspirations of the Poles for independence and freedom? What was Poland to him, and what was he to Poland? Nay, what mattered it to him whether Poland, Finland, the Caucasus, our Central Asiatic provinces and other territories with their various nationalities should be kept together as parts of the Russian Empire or not? Could not he and his family freeze and die without, as well as *with* them?

"From Nikita my thoughts turned to other soldiers and to the whole condition of things in Russia, and the more I thought about it, the more I got ashamed of myself and of the whole class to which I

belonged. The fact was simply this: for generations, nay, for centuries, thousands of people had been working on our estates, toiling from early morning till late at night, and perishing from hunger, cold and disease, while we, their noble-born masters, were systematically and incessantly taking way and wasting the fruits of their labour. They were famishing from want of food, while we had frequently to take medicine against the effects of over-eating and gluttony. They groaned in their misery and sickness, whilst we were playing, singing or dancing. We took away from them everything, and gave them in return nothing. We mocked at their most sacred affections, trampled on their human dignity and honour, and exposed them to death by freezing, whilst we gave ourselves up to orgies and bacchanalias before which those of Babylon and Rome fade into nothingness. We drove them into battle, there to be mutilated or killed altogether, in order to add to our riches and enjoyments, or simply to satisfy our vainglory and lust of power. We committed all these horrible outrages upon our fellow neighbours, and yet we considered ourselves the noblest of men, and with proud heads entered our churches to worship Him whose whole Being was love and compassion for the afflicted ones, who asked nothing from His brothers, but gave them everything, even His very life."

A Revolutionist in the Making.

Count Stroganoff spoke all the time without looking at any one of us, but as if gazing into some distant object and soliloquizing like one who finds relief in unburdening his soul. He now glanced at every one present, and, turning to our host, said in an interrogative tone—

"I am afraid, Mr. Ambrose, I am keeping you all too long with my story, and am going too much into detail?"

"No, no, not in the least," our host replied. "Pray continue, if you are not tired yourself. It is not every day that we have such an opportunity of penetrating, so to say, into the very innermost of Russian life and of the Russian mind. In fact, the more I hear you, the more I realize how Russia is still an unknown land to us, in spite of the books published and endless newspaper and magazine articles."

"Quite so, Mr. Ambrose," said one of the guests. "When an Englishman tells us what he saw and experienced in Russia, he is usually superficial, and tells us, of course, his own impressions from his own English point of view. Now what we really want is dry, unvarnished facts as the Russians themselves see them or experience them, and as the Russians alone can tell us. Excuse me, Count, for interrupting, but I am sure we all are not only

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deeply struck by what you have to tell us, but also by the way you are able to tell your story in what must be to you a foreign tongue. But you Russians have long since acquired the reputation of being great linguists."

Count Stroganoff slightly bowed his head as if acknowledging the compliment, and after a moment's reflection said—

"In my personal case I can scarcely claim any special linguistic capacities, as I was taught English by English tutors from my earliest childhood. Besides, I am simply telling you what I actually witnessed, actually went through, and genuinely felt at the time, and feel even now. Well, to describe my career after those events which opened my eyes as to the people's misery and our direct responsibility for it would fill quite a volume of stirring episodes, and I am, indeed, engaged to write such a volume for a publishing firm. Now I can give you only a general outline of what followed. The first question which naturally presented itself to me was: What is to be done to raise and elevate our people from their terrible ignorance and poverty? It soon became clear to me that these two conditions were simultaneously, or alternately, both the cause and the effect of one another. Ignorance breeds poverty, and vice versa. The people have no means, no chance, to educate their children either at home or at the very few schools which are

open to them. From the age of four or so, the children are already wanted as workers in some way, at home, or in the field or wood. The story of the 'Maltchik's paltchik,' or the mite of a boy, who all alone, over fields of snow and ice, was driving home early in the forenoon a sledge laden with timber, which his father had cut in the forest some miles away, is only too familiar in Russia, being told in nearly all the school-books, in spite of the constant assertion by the aristocrats and officials that the mouzhik is always lazy and does not want to work. But whilst poverty prevents the people from getting any education, their very ignorance serves to prevent their material improvement, thus perpetuating and intensifying their poverty. At first sight the case seems quite a hopeless one, a kind of a vicious circle, but in reality it is not so. The people's ignorance and poverty are not something naturally and organically inalienable from them, but are artificially imposed and forced upon them from the outside by those who rule over them, and whose interest it is that the subjected tax-paying classes should not get ni slishkom ummy, ni slishkom zhirmy. But though——"

"I beg your pardon, Count," interrupted Mr. Ambrose. "What is the meaning of what you just said—ni . . . shish . . . prish. . . or something of the sort? I am sorry I don't speak any foreign language."

"Did I say something in Russian?"

"I suppose it was Russian. You said that the interest of the ruling class demands that the tax-paying classes should not get . . . and here you added some inunderstandable words." Mr. Ambrose could not help smiling complacently at the Count's absent-mindedness.

"Oh," replied the latter, "the language of our childhood forces itself unconsciously to our lips, even when we are far away from our native soil. I meant to say that the ruling power of Russia does not want the tax-paying classes to become 'either too clever or too fat,' both conditions being conducive to the development of an independent mind and rebellious spirit, as the Scripture has it when it says: 'And Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked.'"

"What do you mean by saying the tax-paying classes? Have you in Russia non-tax-paying classes?"

"I again forget that I am not speaking to a Russian. Well, yes, in Russia taxes are paid only by the peasantry, working men, ordinary burghers and the commercial class. They form what the law calls 'Podatnoe Soslovie,' or the tax-paying class, as distinguished from the Dvoryane, or nobility, the military, officialdom, the clergy, and, of course, the higher aristocracy—dukes, princes, counts, barons, etc., all of whom are free from the usual State taxes, and are designated by the law as the 'Privilegi-

rovannoe Soslovie,' or the privileged class. The payment or non-payment of taxes does not make the only difference between these two classes, the privileges of the nobility being numerous in many other cases.

"Thus, for instance, in various parts of Siberia land is granted to them practically gratis, whilst peasants have to pay for it. The State supports from its general funds the special educational institutions of the nobility, artificially helps them to retain their mortgaged property, and supports their special banks. Besides, there are even special codes and courts of justice for the nobility, not to speak of various Government offices which are filled first of all by the sons and daughters of the nobility, and then only by ordinary citizens. But indeed, Mr. Ambrose, we must not at present indulge in any side issues, or I shall never finish the main story in which you are interested."

"I venture, nevertheless, to ask one more question before you continue, and then shall not again disturb you. Can you tell me the relative numbers of the privileged and of the tax-paying classes?"

"Yes, certainly. Indeed, I have been invited by the Statistical Society to give them a paper on Russian Statistics, and I have just completed the collection of various materials on this subject, amongst which there are many instructive figures concerning the nobility, a class, by the way, not

identical with the same class in England. But for the moment I can speak only from memory, and I should say the Russian nobility numbers a million and a half, so that with other elements of the military, officialdom and clergy it is safe to say that only a couple of million people are really interested, and therefore loyal, supporters of the Russian autocratic system of government, and responsible for its internal and external policy against practically the whole population of some one hundred and fifty-eight millions, made speechless and voiceless by the most repressive laws and regulations in existence, rendered worse still by the arbitrariness of the administration generally. Now, when I opened my eyes to the iniquities of the class to which I myself belonged, the first, and since unalterable, conviction that forced itself upon me was that the people's greatest need of all is elementary education, without which the door must remain locked to all other improvements. They must be taught at least to read and write, otherwise they will always remain in the condition of helpless children, the victims of every legal and illegal imposture, of every scoundrel, official or otherwise. Thus my first reform work commenced with the advocacy of opening free schools for the people, though, as I explained before, their poverty would largely hinder their availing themselves of this privilege. My first steps in this direction were met in official circles

partly with wonder, partly with suspicion and irony, though in a few instances with genuine sympathy. 'You want to make the mouzhik sober and educated,' said to me a high dignitary, 'but are you not afraid that he may then say he no longer needs his educators, and even claim your place and position for himself?' I replied that if the mouzhik really became fit for my position, let him by all means occupy it. Besides, the functions of my position having hitherto chiefly consisted of good eating, drinking, smoking, dressing, theatre-going, dishonouring women, and last, but not least, ordering others to kill, and even killing personally, a number of people whom we were pleased to call enemies—yes, all these functions the mouzhik could accomplish easily enough, even in his present state of ignorance. My friend stared at me with an expression of the greatest bewilderment, and said to me on parting, 'You are on a dangerous path.' I laughed at his warning, knowing that I was a great favourite with the Emperor himself, and that my appointment as his personal adjutant was virtually decided upon. Surely, I thought, they will not brand me with the name of 'Nihilist,' and attribute to me designs against the throne. In spite of the warning, I continued to work among my friends, trying to win them over to my scheme of opening by private means free schools for the people. Promises of solid pecuniary support were beginning

to be forthcoming, and next I made the draft of a proposed organization for the carrying out of the work, and privately showed it to the Minister of Public Instruction, who was my personal friend. He only shrugged his shoulders, and said that the opening of schools was a matter for the responsible ministry to look after, and that every one had better attend to the direct and immediate duties of his own office, and not meddle with other departments. I felt stung and humiliated, but the minister was powerful and within his official rights. His tone was one of offended pride, he evidently looking on my proposal as a reflection upon his personal activity. I pointed out that His Majesty would surely be pleased to see private efforts added to those of the Government on behalf of education, to which the minister, with a scarcely perceptible ironical smile, replied, 'Well, if His Majesty should prefer to see schools opened by any one who wishes to do so, of course I shall have to obey orders.' It was clear that the minister was not in favour of any extension of primary education, and would oppose a scheme for opening schools by private subscriptions, even when started by a man in my position, who had a prospect of becoming some day even Minister of War or Commander-in-Chief of the Army.

"The announcement of my appointment as adjutant to the Czar was soon made officially, and

I had immediately to accompany His Majesty on a journey. I felt that I was becoming more and more his favourite, he speaking to me most intimately on various questions which troubled him, and I availed myself of the first opportunity to develop before him the great need of elementary education for the people. I also pleaded for some such concession to the Press as would allow able, honest, competent persons to openly discuss serious public questions which are now dealt with by ignorant and corrupt officials alone, who pursue their personal interests first. Of course I had to be exceedingly cautious in the way I expressed my thoughts, and could not tell him even half of what I really knew and thought, so much was his mind poisoned by flatterers, who always reported to him that Russia is really flourishing under autocracy, and so much was he convinced of his own divine right to rule alone and uncontrollably over the giant empire. Still he understood me perfectly, and replied, quoting evidently some one else's terse expression, that publicity is a double-edged tool, one side covered with honey, the other with poison. It was certainly desirable to give full freedom to the Press and platform, but then that freedom would be used immediately by the ruled class against the ruling, and against the throne itself. The same would happen with education. 'If we,' said he, 'don't govern the people, the people will govern us, and I have no wish to become

a Russian Charles I or Louis XVI. The more we yield to the people, the more they will want, and there would then be only one end, namely, an end to you and me, and to all of us, unless we check in the very bud any attempt to upset from below the existing state of things, and bar all roads leading to revolution.'

"You see, Mr. Ambrose, the Czar spoke plainly and frankly, and he was quite right from the point of view of his personal interests, and he apparently felt quite sure of my sympathy and approval. In this, however, he was mistaken. My heart was no longer with the throne, but with the righteous cause of the people, and I for the first time realized that this cause and the cause of the autocratic Emperor can never be reconciled. It was necessary to choose between the two. Hitherto I had faithfully and devoutly served the Emperor, that is, in all reality, my own selfish interests, lust of power, glory, gain; now I decided to serve the cause of the people against the Emperor, should it even cost me my life.

"My course now was that of so many other peaceable and loyal Russian reformers. Like them, I too found any open public work, within legal bounds, for the amelioration of the lot of the people impossible. The Press Censor stifles any attempt to seriously criticize the state of things and 'shake foundations.' If you enter a peasant's or working man's cottage to have a talk with the occupiers, you

are watched by the police, immediately reported to the gendarme officer, and you become a 'suspected' person. There remains only one alternative: to defy the law and authorities and carry on your propaganda secretly; in other words, to become an outlawed revolutionist. Such, indeed, I soon became, after having been repeatedly thwarted in all my efforts to do some good within the limits of the law. When I say that I have become a *revolutionist*, the word must be, of course, understood in its Russian sense. For my revolutionary activity in Russia would not be considered revolutionary in England, seeing that I only helped to spread uncensored literature of a type and tendency published in England daily in millions of copies by most orthodox and conservative religious and political societies, some of which are even under the patronage of their majesties themselves. I was ultimately arrested, and as a military officer of high position condemned to be shot, but the Emperor commuted my sentence to one of convict labour in the mines for life. However, I worked in the mines only two years, then I was simply kept in prison for another three years, after which I was allowed to live in what is called 'a free settlement' under strict police supervision. To these years in prison and in the 'free settlement' I owe much of the scientific knowledge I possess to-day, for I was allowed the use of theological, historical and general scientific books. Not

having anything else to do, I devoted myself to various studies with the fervour of a good schoolboy, especially to the study of Mongolian languages, as our settlement was not far from the Chinese frontier and I had some facilities for this study. Indeed, I even look back to these years with a kind of gratitude, in spite of many hardships personally gone through, and horrible tragedies I now and again had to witness.

"Of my final escape through Japan and the United States of America you are already aware. It was not accompanied with any sensational incidents. I simply disguised myself as an old woman, reached the Siberian railway, and embarked at Vladivostok on a Japanese steamer bound for Nagasaki. Once on this steamer I was, of course, free, and there was no more need for my disguise."

The Count paused for a moment, and then said—

"Well, that is practically the whole story in outline of how I, an adjutant of the Czar, became a revolutionist, and my story, in its main moral and political aspects, is more or less the story of many other Russian princes, counts, barons, and other noblemen who have abandoned their high positions and become apostles of Freedom and champions of the People's Cause."

As if by common agreement, all present rose from their places and warmly thanked the Count for his

long narrative. Our host certainly voiced the feelings of us all when he said—

"To be sure, Count, I gained to-night a clearer notion of the real meaning of the Russian revolution than I ever got from perusing many volumes, and feel that your country has a glorious future, if it can produce men and women of such infinite kindness and pity for the oppressed, of such self-sacrificing devotion and heroic bravery in the cause of the disinherited ones. I need scarcely assure you that, coming as I do from a stock foremost in English history for the stand it made for popular rights in this country, my humble services, whatever they may amount to, are at your disposal."

The Count expressed his thanks, and as the hour was now late, we all soon took leave of our host, conscious of having spent one of those memorable evenings which make landmarks in one's life, and leave impressions that can never be forgotten.

CHAPTER THREE

SENSATIONAL PRISON ESCAPES IN RUSSIA

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SOPHIE PEROVSKAYA

(*See p.* 119)

CHAPTER THREE

SENSATIONAL PRISON ESCAPES IN RUSSIA

IT is safe to state that the criminal annals of no other country abound with so many prison escapes of the most daring and ingenious nature as the annals of Russia, and this, of course, for several good reasons. Firstly, the prison population of no other country contains such a large percentage of "political" offenders as that of the Muscovite Empire, and with "politicals" the longings for liberty and personal resourcefulness, courage and daring are stronger than in the common criminal. Their education and culture, too, help them considerably to study their new surroundings, the character of their new taskmasters, to correspond and make arrangements with accomplices outside the prison walls, all such advantages being practically absent in the case of the usually quite illiterate, ignorant and helpless common criminal. Secondly, political prisoners have always numerous friends outside willing, and frequently able, to assist their escape, even at the risk of being caught and imprisoned themselves in case of failure. Thirdly,

amongst the prison officials and warders themselves, or the daily changing military guard, there are some who, in their innermost heart, sympathize with the cause for which "politicals" are suffering, and would look "skvoz paltsi" ("through the fingers"), as the Russian saying goes, on the escapades of the latter, whilst they would be more watchful and dutiful in the case of common criminals entrusted to their charge. Fourthly, society at large applauds every escape of "politicals," and would even hide them instead of handing them over to official "justice," which in Russia does not enjoy popular support. And fifthly, the intellectual and moral inferiority of the prison officials, in comparison with the mostly young men and women who are confided to their trust, makes the task of supervision and prevention of escapes a really hard one. The general unbusiness-like habits and carelessness so characteristic of the average Russian, his fondness for intoxicating drink, the weakness of officials for bribery, and many another uncouth trait of the Slav, together with the very blind, machine-like obedience of every *tchinovnik* to anything ordered him by authority in official uniform—all these facts and characteristics are taken advantage of by the clever, scheming and daring conspirator, with the result that almost every day one hears of a new prison escape, frequently of the "most dangerous" terrorists, for the safe custody of whom the most stringent

special regulations were ordered by the central authority.

A few actual cases of escapes will amply illustrate the above statements, and at the same time give some insight into the idiosyncrasies of Russian men and institutions. I prefer to avoid any literary embellishments in the following brief sketches, but to give plain historical facts.

I

A Woman Regicide's Escape

Probably the simplest, and at the same time most characteristic, escape ever effected by an important political prisoner through the inexcusable stupidity and negligence of the guardians was that of the famous Mlle. Sophie Perovskaya, who after her escape became the organizer of the assassination of Alexander II on March 13, 1881. She belonged to the highest Russian aristocracy, her father being for several years the Governor-General of St. Petersburg. Exceedingly intelligent and kind-hearted, but of an iron will and most energetic, she, at the age of sixteen, ran away from home, and soon joined the revolutionary movement, taking part in the most daring attempts to liberate political prisoners. At the age of seventeen she was arrested herself, but through the influence of highly placed friends she was liberated by the personal order of Alexander II.

Continuing again her propaganda, she was arrested once more in 1878 in Southern Russia, and this time exiled to the Arctic regions. On the journey to the north she had several opportunities of escaping, but the gendarmes who accompanied her were such good fellows and were so kind to her, allowing her certain liberties and comforts, that she conscientiously objected to running away from them, as they, of course, would be tried and severely punished for carelessness and neglect. During the journey, however, she was handed over to two other gendarmes, who proved real watch-dogs and treated her most severely, in accordance with their instructions. Sophie was now free from conscientious scruples, and looked out for an opportunity of escaping. The party had to stay the night at Chudoff railway station, and the two gendarmes slept in the same room with their prisoner, one of them accommodating himself at the window and the other stretching himself out on the floor at the door. Sophie lay on a wooden seat, and, pretending to be fast asleep, began to snore. The gendarmes, convinced that everything was right, soon fell asleep too, and began to snore in all earnestness. Sophie then gently rose and tried the door, which she found to be without a lock or bolt and opening outside! The stupid gendarmes evidently thought the door opened inside, and did not even trouble to try. Sophie now simply stepped across the sleeping

guard, and in a moment she was free. She was afraid to buy a ticket at the office, lest the cashier might afterwards give some information about her, but managed to slip into the next train for St. Petersburg, paying for her journey to the conductor, who probably appropriated the money for himself, as is frequently the case in Russia. All the time the gendarmes continued to snore, and when they awoke Sophie was already beyond their reach.

After the assassination of Alexander II, when St. Petersburg was turned into a military camp, and more than eight hundred people were arrested within the first two days in the capital alone, Perovskaya, with reckless courage, would not consent to leave the dangerous city, and continued her propaganda, driving about in an open *drozhki*, until she was recognized and arrested on the Nevski Prospect, this time to expiate her deed by her own life, as she was shortly hanged, along with the other regicides, on April 15, 1881.

II

The Russian Bath as a Means of Escape

Simple, easy, and yet very ingenious was the first escape of the famous revolutionist, Leo Deutsch, whose record of repeated arrests and escapes is probably without parallel, and so far without a "conclusion," as he is still living, and

continuing to work most energetically in the cause of the Russian revolution.

Deutsch was first arrested in Kieff while serving as a volunteer in a local regiment. Now, in Russia, where many things, politically and otherwise, are literally upside down, a so-called "volunteer" does not mean one who freely and voluntarily joins the army, as compulsory conscription is universal, and nobody has a choice in the matter. All young men on reaching the age of twenty-one must appear at the recruiting office and draw a lot. A certain number of recruits are levied from each district, and those who have drawn high lots may not be wanted to actually join the army, and are left in the reserve to be called out when wanted. University men and those who have finished their education in Government middle schools have the privilege of not drawing the lot, but of *voluntarily* joining the army, in which case their actual service with the colours is reduced to three or six months respectively; otherwise, if enlisted in the army by drawing the lot, their actual service would last the ordinary number of years. This is what the Russian law terms as "volnoopredieliayooshtcheesia, *i. e.* one preferring *voluntarily* to serve only six months, rather than to run the risk of drawing the lot and having to serve three years.

These so-called "volunteers" enjoy better treatment whilst in the army, as their education is usually

superior to that of the commanding officers, and they would not submit resignedly to kicks, blows, or simply insults, as does the helpless and forlorn recruit from the ranks of the illiterate peasantry or working classes. Deutsch, for instance, objected to an officer addressing him with the derogatory "thou" instead of the polite "you," and answered the insult with the same insult; he, besides, absented himself without leave for five days from the barracks, aiding in the escape of a political prisoner, Luryé. For all these transgressions, Deutsch was arrested, committed to trial by court-martial, and serious consequences awaited him. He therefore decided to attempt to escape, and the only possible way to accomplish this was through the medium of a bath!

Here I must make another explanation. A Russian bath is an historical and national institution in the land of the Czar. The unsanitary conditions of Russian dwelling-houses, their overcrowding, the keeping of the windows hermetically shut during the long winter, the sheepskins, fur coats and other clothing, seldom changed, and various other conditions, bring about a very irritable state of a Russian's skin, and make the frequent use of the public bath imperative. This is resorted to religiously once a week, and the heat employed is such as would probably kill an Englishman on the spot. High and low, rich and poor alike, cannot

exist without it; the charges for admission commencing from a halfpenny. Such a national, almost sacred, institution has the Russian bath become that it is said one of the symptoms which helped to discover that the "False Demetrius," sitting on the throne of Russia in the beginning of the seventeenth century, was not a Russian by birth was his disregard for the Russian bath. The need of the bath is so great, indeed, and the institution is so reverently kept up by the nation at large, that even the same authority which thinks nothing of freezing, starving and knouting its prisoners, and refusing them correspondence or interviews with their relatives or friends, will never refuse their demand to have a bath. As a matter of fact, practically all Russian prisons of any size have their own bath establishments attached to them, and where this is not the case the prisoners are sent even to the public bath—of course under escort of guards. This is almost the only bright side of the Russian prison system, bringing periodic comfort and relief to the unhappy inmates. The reader will now better understand and appreciate the episode of Mr. Deutsch's escape.

He was incarcerated in the military prison, which had not premises of its own, but was located in a hired private house on the Bibikoff Boulevard, Kieff, a thing also peculiarly Russian. This prison had no bath attached to it, and the arrested soldiers

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LEO DEUTSCH

were taken to the bath of the general prison, situated almost opposite. Deutsch, however, demanded to be taken to a general public bath, pretending he did not want to mix with common criminals. The officer on duty refused, and suggested that Deutsch should apply for permission to a higher authority. This Deutsch declined to do, knowing well enough that such permission would not be granted. However, another officer, who was the regimental Bursar, supported Deutsch's application. And here I must give another detail, also peculiarly Russian. Deutsch ordered his own food, and the regimental Bursar was not averse to increase his own scanty income by supplying the meals from his own private kitchen, charging for them rather exorbitant prices. Deutsch paid without a murmur, so he was looked upon as a man of means not to be despised. Thus it came about that the gallant defender of the throne, church, fatherland, law and order interceded with his brother officer on behalf of a Nihilist, the avowed enemy of all these sacred objects. He argued with the officer in command of the military prison that "Deutsch is not a common soldier, but a 'volunteer' of the second class, who has to serve only six months; surely he would not think of escaping, charged as he was only with the infringement of military discipline." Evidently both officers were not aware of the prisoner's more serious political offences. The upshot of it all was that Deutsch was at last

allowed to go to the general public bath, but three soldiers were sent with him instead of the usual two, and they received the strictest injunctions to keep a most vigilant eye upon their charge.

Upon arriving at the bath, two soldiers took up positions at the only two windows of the establishment, whilst the third stood at the door inside. Escape seemed utterly impossible, as all the exits were guarded, and every one leaving the establishment, by whatever opening, must pass one of the soldiers. Deutsch undressed and handed over his clothing and a purse with some money to the soldier watching inside. It was in the middle of February, and so bitter a frost prevailed outside that there could be no question of any one leaving the bath naked. The soldier inside thus felt quite safe about his prisoner, keeping his clothing as he did. However, on entering the hot room, Deutsch found there a comrade with whom the plan of escape had been settled before. The latter had brought with him into the hot room a bundle of ordinary civilian clothing, in which Deutsch dressed at once, and with an assured air walked out of the premises without any challenge. The soldier had seen the prisoner only in his military uniform, and now did not recognize him in a civilian's clothes. Deutsch had, besides, over his head the bashlyik (hood) so much used in Russia, and this article, no doubt, largely helped the transformation. Outside the building he

had to pass one of the soldiers watching at the window, but he, too, paid no attention to the private gentleman leaving the bath. Once in the street, another comrade met him with a carriage, in which both immediately drove away.

The poor soldiers waited a long time for the appearance of the bather, got finally alarmed, and informed the authorities of the escape, which at the time nobody could explain. The chimney passage was examined, but it was found to be utterly impossible as a means of escape. Only long afterwards did it dawn upon the officials that the prisoner must have passed his guards somehow disguised and unrecognized.

III

Another Arrest and a Second Wonderful Escape

The above escape took place in February 1876, and henceforth Deutsch was compelled to commence a life of an "illegal" subject, *i. e.* one hiding his own name and identity, using false passports, hunted everywhere by the police, and liable to be captured any moment.

However, in the autumn of 1877 Deutsch was again captured and arrested in connection with the organization of 3,000 peasants for revolutionary purposes. He was again confined in the Kieff

prison, where his comrades in the same affair, Stefanovitch and Bohanovsky, had in the meantime been lodged too.

In the beginning of 1878, all three escaped from the prison in a manner probably unparalleled. A revolutionist, Frolenko, managed to penetrate into the prison as a workman, under the name of Michael, to do some odd jobs. "Michael" did his work and conducted himself generally so well that soon the governor of the prison offered him the post of warder in the department of common criminals. Here, too, he discharged his duties so conscientiously and intelligently that implicit trust was placed in him by the prison authorities, who soon transferred him to the department of the "politicals." Here "Michael" took, of course, the greatest care to avert any suspicion of his complicity in a plot for the escape of his comrades, which he, nevertheless, was arranging all the time with the minutest care and foresight. Outside, the arrangements were in the hands of the famous revolutionist, Ossinsky, afterwards captured and executed. He had in readiness a boat with provisions on the river Dnieper, and supplied his four comrades with warders' uniforms to put on, in order to let themselves out of the premises, and with private clothes in which to travel afterwards. On the appointed night, "Michael" unlocked their cells after all had gone to sleep and let them out. As fate would have it, one of them stumbled and

fell in the dark corridor, and in his fall caught a rope, which was nothing else than that of the alarm bell. A tremendous sound rang instantly through the whole building, and for the moment it seemed that the plan of escape was doomed. But "Michael" did not lose his presence of mind at this perilous moment, and calmly explained to the other warders who awoke from their sleep that he himself had accidentally raised the alarm, and that everything was all right. So much authority had "Michael" secured for himself that no more notice was taken of the occurrence. A little later, when everybody was asleep again, "Michael" conducted his comrades, now themselves disguised as warders, to the prison gate, where the doorkeeper let them all out without the slightest remark. Outside, Ossinsky, disguised in the uniform of a military officer, awaited them, ready to exercise "official" influence in case any untoward incidents happened. Once at large they betook themselves to the boat, and for a whole week they plied undetected on the broad Dnieper, until finally the same Ossinsky supplied them with money and false passports, and they were able now to move about more or less freely.

IV

Muishkin's Escapes

A record of indomitable courage, perseverance, and repeated escapes and arrests is that of the hero-martyr, Hypolyte Muishkin, whose tragic career of devotion and self-sacrifice evoked the admiration, if not the sympathy, even of his captors and tormentors.

As quite a young man he was the first to learn the system of Russian shorthand writing invented by a Russian general, by whom Muishkin was taken to the Winter Palace to demonstrate before Czar Alexander II the capabilities of the new invention. The latter was so pleased with Muishkin's work that he personally ordered twenty-five roubles to be given to him as a reward and encouragement.

But neither the honour of being in the presence of the Czar nor his personal favour bestowed upon Muishkin made the latter a friend of the autocracy. Muishkin was soon appointed Government stenographer, and started in Moscow his own printing works. The books, etc., issued were authorized by the Censorship, but before long Muishkin, carried away by the Reform movement, began also to issue clandestinely unauthorized literature for the people. The police got its suspicions raised, made a raid upon the premises, and discovered huge bales of

"seditious" literature ready for despatch. All the workpeople were arrested there and then, but Muishkin, who was at the time absent from the building, was informed of the raid, and thus escaped arrest. This happened in July 1874.

He now became an outlaw, and resolved on a desperate plan to liberate from prison the famous novelist and political economist, Nicholas Tchernishevsky, who since 1862 had been kept in confinement in the little town of Villuisk in the wildest part of North-Eastern Siberia. Muishkin's plan was to disguise himself as a gendarme officer and forge Government orders authorizing him to transfer Tchernishevsky to a new place of confinement. Having well matured his plan, he set out for Siberia and finally reached Irkutsk. Here he managed to get into the service of the political gendarmerie, and in the course of a few months familiarized himself with the ways of secret official correspondence. He then concocted an order in the name of the Governor of Irkutsk to the Governor of Villuisk, Captain Zhirkoff, instructing the latter to hand over Tchernishevsky to "Meshtcherinoff" (Muishkin's assumed name) for transmission to the prison of Blagoveshtchensk on the Amur.

However, on the journey Muishkin met with the assistant head of the police of Villuisk, to whom he was indiscreet enough to tell of his mission. The official got suspicious of "Meshtcherinoff," chiefly

because he travelled quite alone, without a Cossack convoy, which ordinarily accompanies a Government emissary in those wild regions, especially on such an important mission. Other things also strengthened his suspicions, and Captain Zhirkoff, informed beforehand, told Muishkin on his arrival that he must have an order from General Tchernyaeff, Governor of Yakutsk, his direct chief. Muishkin, realizing that his mission had failed, offered to go himself to Yakutsk for the desired order, but Zhirkoff now said that he could not let him go such a distance without the convoy of two Cossacks. This meant practically an arrest, but Muishkin had no choice and consented.

The two powerful Cossacks kept the strictest watch over Muishkin during the journey, which was made on horseback, and he realized that if he was to attempt an escape it must be done before they reached Yakutsk, where, of course, he would be imprisoned at once. Accordingly, at a favourable moment and spot Muishkin dashed into the depth of the forest they were passing, and was pursued immediately by the Cossacks, who fired at him several times, but missed their aim. One Cossack continued his pursuit; Muishkin then turned round, and, firing and wounding him, finally made his escape.

The position of Muishkin after his escape into the wilderness, amidst the howling of all kinds of

beasts of prey, is easier to imagine than to describe. During the day it was warm enough, but at night the damp and cold were bitter, though it was in the height of the summer season. And yet he withstood for a whole week the indifference and cruelty of nature, but he could not long withstand the vileness of his fellow-man. As soon as the Cossacks returned to Villuisk, Captain Zhirkoff organized a tremendous *oblava*, or hunting expedition, in which he engaged not only all the soldiers at his command, but also numbers of the savage natives, promising a big reward to any one who would capture the fugitive and bring him alive or dead. Muishkin was finally found more dead than alive from hunger, cold and exhaustion. The Central Government gave an order to send him back to European Russia, and he was subsequently incarcerated in the fortress of Peter and Paul, there to await his trial.

V

Another Escape and Another Capture

Muishkin was condemned to ten years' penal servitude with deprivation of all civil rights. A series of more attempts to escape followed, of which the most noteworthy and sensational was that practically accomplished from the Kara political prison, Siberia.

At first, he and his comrades started to dig a

tunnel under the walls of the prison, but it soon filled with water, owing to the marshy ground, and the work had to be abandoned.

Then another desperate enterprise was undertaken and successfully carried through.

The prison consisted of several separate buildings, amongst which there was a small workshop quite close to the stockade, or the wall of high, sharpened logs which formed the outside enclosure surrounding the whole prison. The convicts laboured in the workshop preparing various articles, and could walk freely during the day in the courtyard. After supper they were all shut up in their cells, an officer passing from door to door and looking into the dimly lighted rooms, ascertaining whether all the convicts were in their places. The plan of escape consisted in hiding in the workshop after finishing work, then during the night climbing up the roof, from there to reach the stockade and descend on the other side. The difficulties in the way were enormous. Firstly, the sharpened logs of the stockade were far higher than the roof of the workshop. Secondly, at the four corners outside the prison and at the gate there were five sentry-boxes, occupied each by an armed soldier watching night and day. Thirdly—and this was the most difficult of all obstacles—the absence of the hiding convicts would immediately be noticed by the officer during his evening verification of the cells. Besides,

the sentinels on duty were frequently changed, and there was locomotion in the courtyard even during the night. Under all these conditions it would seem hardly conceivable that an escape could be achieved, and yet it is a fact that not only Muishkin, but seven other of his fellow-prisoners managed to liberate themselves in the way described. Dummies were placed on the sleeping-platforms to deceive the eye of the officer, and the greatest precautions were taken to avoid the slightest noise in scaling up and down the walls. By common agreement it was decided that Muishkin and one Khrushtsheff should be the first to make the attempt, and they successfully carried it through. Then, in the course of a couple of weeks, three other couples followed one another. One of the last couples, however, unfortunately fell heavily to the ground outside the prison, or, as some say, into a pool of water, and thus attracted the attention of one of the sentinels. The latter fired at the fugitive, but in the darkness of the night missed his aim. The report of firearms at once gave the alarm, and when it was discovered that no less than eight of the most dangerous political offenders had made good their escape, the excitement and fury of the prison authorities can well be imagined. The intention of the fugitives was to make their way towards the Pacific, and there to embark on some vessel bound for America. It is needless to say that the whole of Eastern Siberia

was aroused immediately after the event. Full descriptions of the fugitives were wired and their photographs sent to the police officers. Searching parties were organized on a tremendous scale. Orders were issued to arrest all travellers, or even inhabitants of towns and villages, whose passports or personalities awakened the slightest suspicion. The forests in all parts of the vast Trans-Baikal Province were scoured by numerous native savages, who were stimulated to help the police by promises of big rewards. No wild beast was ever hunted by man with such ferocity as these poor Russians, who, in any other civilized country, would have enjoyed universal esteem and affection. It seemed as if the safety of the whole Russian Empire depended upon the recapture of this handful of university students, and the Government decided that no effort and no expense should be spared in carrying out this object.

The escape of the eight convicts took place during April 1882, that is, at a time when the cold is still intense in that part of the world. Under all the circumstances the marvel is not that the Government gradually recaptured all the eight fugitives, but that some of them managed to cover hundreds of miles before they were re-arrested. Muishkin and Khrushtsheff, the first escaped couple, made, indeed, a journey of more than two thousand miles, actually reached the sea-coast, and were arrested only in Vladivostok just when they were on the

point of starting for other more free and hospitable shores.

Muishkin, with some other comrades classed as "most dangerous," were soon sent back to European Russia, and incarcerated in one of the "stone bags" of the terrible fortress of Schlusselburg. Here our hero lived until the autumn of 1885, unutterably weary of life and praying in vain to be killed or to be allowed to kill himself. He at last got the opportunity of striking the governor of the fortress in his face, an offence which this time finally brought the dread favour he sought, for he was promptly court-martialled and shot within the precincts of the gloomy fortress.

VI

A "Kopening" Hoax and the Escape of Ten Prisoners

The sensational, clever trick of a swindler in Germany who quite recently, disguised as a military captain, ordered a convoy of real soldiers to arrest the Mayor of Kopening, near Berlin, whilst he himself appropriated the money from the town treasury, has some counterpart in a similar audacious hoax perpetrated in the spring of 1906 in Russian Poland, which resulted in the liberation of ten important "politicals" from an almost certain death.

Warsaw has a famous prison popularly called

Paviak, from one of its four surrounding streets. Originally intended for the ordinary criminal, it is now used largely as a place of detention for "politicals." Paviak is encompassed by a very high wall, and is strongly guarded by military as well as by warders carrying both sword and revolver. An iron discipline is maintained; interviews between prisoners and their friends are only allowed under the most exceptional circumstances. In short, if there ever was a prison from which escape seemed hopeless, it was Paviak. In April 1906 it contained a large number of political prisoners, among whom ten were most important, being accused of various attempts, successful and otherwise, on the lives of police, military and other officials. They were all to be tried by court-martial, and were nearly all certain to be sentenced to death. Their friends, who resolved to save them, if possible, knew that the smallest untoward incident, the slightest hitch in the carrying out of their plan, meant failure, and that failure was death to them as well as to their imprisoned comrades. But the plan was as perfect as plan could be, and it succeeded. The prison administration was made to believe that the military Governor of Warsaw desired the transfer of the ten prisoners from the Paviak to the citadel. A telephone message pretending to come from the chief of the city police further advised the prison Governor that the prisoners would be conveyed to

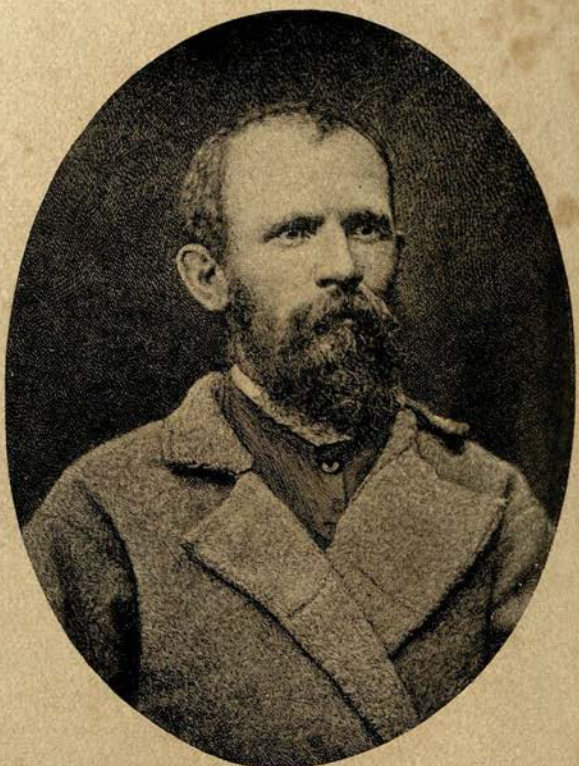
the fortress under escort of an officer of gendarmes, who would bring his own guard. The messages were taken in good faith, and the ten "politicals" were prepared to be transferred. But, according to prison regulations, no prisoner can be handed over without the written and sealed official order of the head of the police or the military governor. This document, too, was duly and adequately prepared; and behold, one evening a man in the uniform of a gendarme appeared at the Paviak and handed over to the officer on duty an official missive ordering the transfer of the ten "politicals," each of them being duly mentioned by name and described in the document. There was in the whole thing nothing to arouse suspicion. The prisoners were sent for, and the gendarme officer meanwhile sat down in the office and coolly lighted a cigarette. He had brought six policemen with him, so there seemed to be no necessity for providing the prison conveyance with another escort, and the only prison servant sent with the party was the coachman. The gendarme, before starting, duly certified in writing that the ten prisoners had been delivered into his charge, and then watched how they were placed in the carriage. Two of the policemen seated themselves on the box by the coachman; the others were behind. In a few minutes the heavy prison gates were swung open . . . and there were ten empty cells in the Paviak! Presently the gendarme directed the

coachman to drive first of all to the police-station, instead of the fortress, alleging that the convoy would be there met by a police escort on horseback.

Then, bidding his men keep a vigilant eye on the prisoners, he took his departure. It was quite dark, and the prison van was driving down the deserted Zhitnaia Street, when the coachman's hands were suddenly seized from one side, while a rag soaked in chloroform was stuffed into his mouth from the other. . . . Next morning he was found *inside* the conveyance, still under the effects of the chloroform, the horses were tied to a tree, and round about there were lying prison clothing, uniforms and swords, as the only remnants of the ten prisoners and their escort.

Warsaw, which was at the time under a state of military siege, soon learned the exciting news, which filled every one with wonder at the heroic achievement. The authorities were at once up in arms, but all their efforts to discover the culprits proved of no avail.

Extraordinarily daring as the above escapes were, yet I believe that were a prize established for the most adventurous prison escape imaginable, it would undoubtedly be awarded to Gregory Gershuni, the founder of the "Fighting Detachment" of the Russian revolutionists. He effected his liberation from the Akatui prison, Eastern Siberia, not only with the greatest risk of his life and a subtle



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ingenuity of mind, but also with the help of scientific knowledge and mechanical skill. This masterpiece of the art of conspiracy, accomplished as recently as October 26, 1906, must be told with some details to be fully understood and duly appreciated, and to it I will devote my next and concluding sketch.

CHAPTER FOUR

GERSHUNI'S UNPARALLELED FEAT

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In February 1904 a court-martial, held in St. Petersburg, sentenced to death three political prisoners, Gregory Gershuni, Evgeni Grigorieff and Michael Melnikoff, for belonging to a secret society called "Boevaia Organizatsia" ("the Fighting Organization"), which carried out the assassinations of the Minister of the Interior, Sipiagin, and of the Governor of Ufa, Bogdanovitch, and organized attempts on the lives of the Procureur of the Holy Synod, Pobiedonostseff, and the Governor of Kharkoff, Prince Obolensky. Several other prisoners implicated in the same affair and tried by the same court were sentenced to various terms of convict labour.

From the preliminary investigations, as well as during the proceedings at the trial, it became clear that Gershuni was the moving and leading spirit in the whole conspiracy, that it was he who found the material means for the undertakings, directed the movements of his confederates, and generally exercised an enormous moral influence upon all active

revolutionary elements. Even at the trial his dignified conduct and powerful, statesmanlike speech produced an extraordinary impression upon all present, who could not help feeling involuntarily a certain amount of respect for his striking personality. In fact, after the death verdict, one of the judges, talking with a colleague and pointing to Gershuni, quite loudly said—

"Da, vot etot deistvitelno tcheloviek!" ("Yes, this one is indeed a man!")

With the characteristics of Gershuni as a revolutionary leader, his organizing power and literary talent I deal at some length in my work, *Heroes and Heroines of Russia.* Here I have space only to relate of his wonderful escape, the story of which sounds, indeed, like a bit of sensational fiction, but is nevertheless absolutely true in every particular.

I

The fact that the accused themselves had not personally committed any murder, and probably also the general public sympathy with the revolutionary extremists, led to the death sentences being commuted to penal servitude for life. Gershuni was then incarcerated in the dreaded Schlusselburg Fortress, from which no prisoner has ever yet escaped, and whence information seldom

reaches the outer world. After the publication of the Czar's "Constitutional" Manifesto in October 1905, there was a national outcry for a political amnesty, and the older prisoners kept at Schlusselburg were, indeed, shortly liberated. Gershuni was kept there yet for some time and finally, in February 1906, he was transported to the Akatui prison, Eastern Siberia.

Needless to say, the thoughts of every political convict are always concentrated upon the possibility of making good his escape, and from the moment of his arrival at Akatui, Gershuni began to study for that purpose his new surroundings, the prison regulations, the characters of his gaolers, etc., etc. For a time, however, an escape seemed utterly impossible. Several previous attempts at digging tunnels under the prison walls had been discovered, and led only to increased vigilance, the outside watch alone having been augmented from four sentinels to twenty. Nevertheless the political prisoners decided that Gershuni at least should escape, if even most desperate means were employed; and the plan settled upon was to utilize for that purpose the very houses of the prison governor and officials, which stand quite outside the prison at some distance from it!

To understand better all the events that followed this decision it is necessary to point out the extraordinary inner life prevailing in all large Siberian

prisons. The convicts there, whether common or political prisoners, form quite a little republic, with their elected *Starosta*, or Elder, and other "deputies," who are the representatives of all the prisoners before the authorities in matters concerning the whole community. The prisoners have themselves to cook or bake their food, to do all the washing, cleaning, and every other necessary work. The Starosta receives the money allowance for all, orders everything, and has to give an account both to the authorities and to his fellow-prisoners. The prisoner librarian deals with receiving and distributing books, the prisoner hospital-manager attends to the sick; another prisoner is made overseer of the workshop, etc., etc. It must be understood that, whatever the horrors of Siberian prisons are, they at least have the one redeeming feature of solitary confinement being quite unknown there, except as a punishment for insubordination, riot, etc. The prisoners live a free communal life within the prison walls, and are left to carry on their domestic work with as little interference as possible. The provisioning of hundreds of the inmates is practically in their own hands, the kitchen is in their own possession, and they can arrange their "menus" as they like. All this implies a tremendous work for the prisoners, especially during the autumn season, when it is necessary to prepare a supply of provisions for the whole long winter, as the roads

frequently become impassable, and "shops" are at a distance of hundreds of miles.

Now, the favourite Russian national dish, prepared practically every day in the mouzhik's hovel, as well as in the Czar's palace, is the famous Shtchi, or Borshtch, consisting of pickled cabbage boiled into a thick soup with linseed or sunflower-seed oil, or ordinary fat and meat, according to one's worldly possessions. To prepare this pickled cabbage for the whole prison for the long winter enormous barrels are, of course, wanted, and these at Akatui were stored in a cellar situated in the courtyard of the houses of the governor and other officials, standing, as already mentioned, outside the prison. To this cellar the prisoners now and again carry various other provisions under the escort of warders or soldiers, everything passing through the prison gates being, of course, carefully examined.

II

The possibility of a prisoner being carried out through the gates as "provisions" occurred to many, but was given up as utterly hopeless. If even such a contraband succeeded, it would only have been placed in the locked-up cellar outside, which is in itself even a worse prison than that from which the escape was to be made. Nevertheless, in the absence of any other means of escape, it was decided

to venture upon this most desperate attempt, in which Gershuni stood the most serious risk of being simply suffocated even before the barrel with the pickled cabbage left the prison gate, or after it had been deposited in the cellar outside. The preparations and the whole organization of the escape were simply marvellous to perfection, for consider all the circumstances and conditions which were necessary to more or less ensure a successful issue.

First of all it was necessary to procure a barrel large enough to contain a man supplied with a change of clothing to put on after he had left it, then to partition off about a third of the barrel for the cabbage and the liquid, so as to deceive any official likely to inspect the provisions. Then it was necessary to arrange some breathing apparatus and let into the barrel the outside air. All this being successful, it was necessary to dig a tunnel from the cellar outside, and arrange also a system of signalization from the outside, so as to give the fugitive warning in case there were passers-by at the moment of his leaving the tunnel. Should all these processes succeed, it was necessary to have horses and a vehicle in readiness at some distance to meet the fugitive, and at the same time to arrange something and somehow within the prison to conceal as long as possible the absence of Gershuni, and give him a chance of gaining some distance and finding a safe place of hiding.

To accomplish all these preparations both inside and outside the prison under the lynx-eyed, constant vigilance of warders, soldiers and officials seems indeed a superhuman task, possible only in a work of fiction. Yet it was accomplished, and the fact is the best answer to all incredulous questions.

A suitable barrel was procured, as well as two gutta-percha tubes, which were fixed in holes made in the bottom, one tube to breathe in the air, the other for breathing it out. The date fixed for the escape had several times to be changed owing to unfavourable circumstances. The best time for carrying out the plan was an early morning hour, for during the night all prisoners are locked up in their cells. Then the digging of the tunnel had to be completed during the night just before the escape, as it was dangerous to have the exit stand open too long. Thus it was necessary that all the operations of putting Gershuni into the barrel, taking it into the cellar, and his leaving the tunnel should be carried out in as little time as possible, as during the day his absence might be noticed at any moment.

After all details inside and outside the prison were arranged the date for the escape was finally fixed for the morning of the 13th (26th) of October. The arrangements outside were in the hands of prisoners who, after a term of confinement, are transferred to what is called "the free colony," which is a settlement outside the prison where the

convicts enjoy more freedom of movement within several miles from the colony. At the appointed date and hour, a signal from outside was received that everything was all right, and with feverish activity the filling of the barrel commenced. Just a few minutes before, Gershuni, who was the prison librarian, went to the chief warder offering him "an absorbingly interesting" book to read, and asking him to send the tailor "to-morrow" to measure him for a new coat. Gershuni also went to the day overseer and arranged with him about men to help him to bring in later in the day logs of wood for the ovens. All these tricks were performed simply in order that they should see him, and not think of him much during the rest of the day.

III

What followed I will now give partly in Gershuni's own words—

"Stealthily I reached the room where my comrades were waiting for me, and in a moment I was all ready in the barrel, bending my body as much as possible. Over my head they began to fasten a leather, and it became pitch dark, when suddenly one shouted, 'The plate, the plate! You devils, you have forgotten the plate!' As the officer examining the barrel when passing through the gate

might have poked with his sword through the cabbage and pierced the leather, it was arranged to protect my head with an iron plate, which, however, was forgotten at the moment.

"The plate is immediately brought, some one gives me a last pressing of the hand, another kisses me on the head, and I hear the comforting words—

"'Farewell, dear comrade; everything is all right; be calm.' The leather is once more stretched and knocked with nails to the sides. I hear the cabbage falling above, and soon I am soaked in the liquor which penetrates around the leather cover. All my attention is, however, concentrated upon regulating my breathing through the tubes, and holding them so that they should not become somehow entangled or broken. It was important to check a little the action of the heart, and to prevent fainting, for which purpose I was supplied with ether, wine and ice-water. The noise of the falling cabbage continued, and for a moment I wondered whether I was really being buried alive, and should ever rise again.

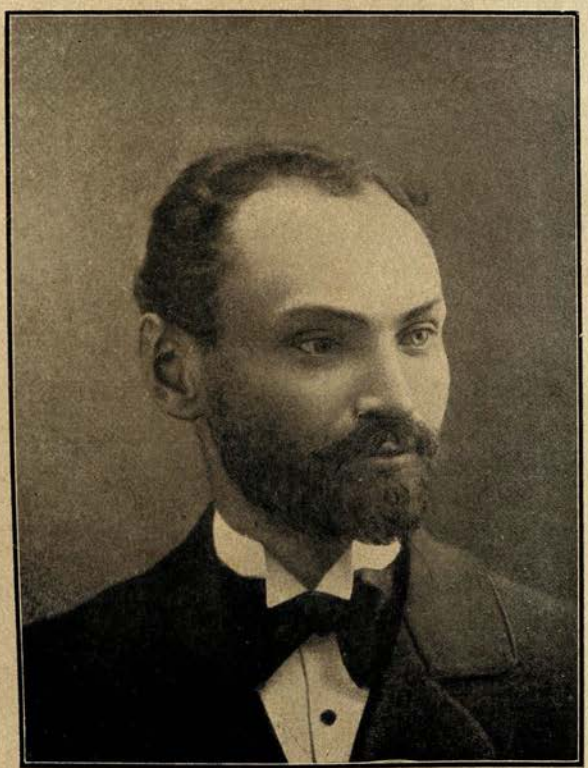
"The next act now commenced. I absolutely did not feel how they carried out the barrel from the room down several steps on to the sledge. I heard only the words, 'Hei, open the gates!' and felt that the sledge stopped, and that some negotiations were proceeding. Then I heard a voice, 'Hei,

children, now, quick!' and I feel how the sledge slides swiftly down the hill outside the prison. Thank Providence, we have passed through!

"It is remarkable that during all the time I was sitting cringing in the barrel I felt no excitement, no anxiety, no hope, no doubt, no fear, no joy, no expectation, nothing at all. Past and future were totally obliterated, and my mood, if any, was more, so to say, a practical business-like one, concentrated on the necessities of the immediate moment. A similar mood I experienced when, after my trial, I was taken out from my cell at night and conducted to the office, to hear there my death sentence."

The cellar in the courtyard of the governor's house consisted of a large room practically even with the ground, and another room at the end deeper in the ground, very dirty and quite dark. It was decided to put down the barrel in the second room, as in the first it would be dangerous, the wives of the officials frequently coming there, when they might just alight upon the scene of Gershuni's emerging from the barrel. To the convoy which accompanied the conspirators it was explained that the first room was not warm enough, and the fresh cabbage would soon become frozen.

The operation of letting down the very heavy barrel was no easy matter, and two soldiers of the convoy helped in it. The barrel, once on the



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GREGORY GERSHUNI

ground, rolled several times over, and with it, of course, Gershuni, who still managed to keep safely the two breathing tubes.

In a few minutes three knocks at the barrel announced to Gershuni that everything was right. The cover upon the entrance into the second room was put back in its place; then, with great banging and noise, the outside door of the upper room was locked, all this noise and banging having been made purposely as signals to Gershuni that everything was all right.

IV

In case something untoward might happen to Gershuni, and he might not be able to free himself from the barrel, it was arranged that a comrade from outside should hide himself in the tunnel near the wall of the upper cellar, and as soon as he heard the doors locked again he was to enter the cellar and render the prisoner every assistance. As he did not appear, Gershuni made efforts to get out of the barrel himself. He had a knife with which to cut through the leather cover, but in his cramped up position and lack of space, also having to hold the breathing tubes, he could not free his hand enough to make the cut across the whole of the leather. He only made a hole through which a mass of cabbage and liquor poured, tearing away the tubes he held

with the other hand, which had already become weakened and almost paralyzed.

The moment was a dangerous one, as in a few minutes, of course, he would be suffocated. Fighting now for a breath of life, in the literal sense of the word, he strained his last strength to the uttermost, and finally succeeded in knocking out with his head the whole leather cover, which was not nailed round the barrel very firmly, but which was nevertheless very difficult to remove on account of the weight of the cabbage above it.

"I do not remember," Gershuni tells us, "how I laboured at my first appearance in this world. But at this my second birth I had to work strenuously indeed; at the same time, unlike all other new-born babes, I did my best not to utter a sound, but, on the contrary, to keep as quiet as possible. I eagerly breathed in the damp cold air, and drank the wine, with the ether, I had with me. I tried to look around with the curiosity of a new-born, but could see absolutely nothing, the darkness being intense. Suddenly I heard steps, and saw the cover of the entrance being opened, and some one's legs protruding down. For a moment I thought to hide myself again in the barrel, not being certain who was the visitor. Whilst thus hesitating, and not being able in the dim light penetrating through the opening to see whose legs they were, I heard suddenly a whisper, 'It is I!'

"This was the voice of a friend, of my 'doctor-accoucheur' coming to help my deliverance, and I, the new-born one, greeting him with a knife in one hand and a bottle of wine in the other. What a progressive birth-scene indeed!

"'Is everything all right, friend?' I asked him.

"'Yes, yes; come quick now and follow me,' he replied.

"We took out from the barrel my new costume, which was quite soaked in the pickle liquor, and tied the barrel around with a cloak prepared beforehand, so that in case some one came in he should not notice the half-empty barrel at once. A few steps and we are both in the upper cellar, shutting up the lower cellar behind us. We come to the spot where the boards are cut through, I in front, and my accoucheur behind, he putting back the boards in their place as if nothing has happened. To the left, he tells me, and I see a narrow hole through the foundation, and for a moment I shudder, and then I begin to crawl. Unfortunately I made a mistake in creeping in on my stomach, whereas crawling on my back would have been the better way. The tunnel was about twenty steps long, and when about in the middle I suddenly could not move neither ahead nor back. I struggled *on*, turning myself on all sides, and finally we reached a point a few yards from the exit.

"Here we made a halt, and, looking at my watch,

I saw it was just nine o'clock, that is, about half-an-hour since the journey from the prison commenced. It was, of course, necessary to make the exit without any delay, as any moment my absence might be noticed in the prison. From our position we could see the corner of the houses of the governor and the officials. We hear voices of passers-by, who could easily notice us if only their attention was attracted to the mouth of the tunnel. We lie and await for the prearranged signals. First signal, 'The road is occupied.' Another signal to the same effect. I began to turn about a little, trying to adjust my clothes. I had taken with me even a pocket looking-glass, as all ladies know well enough that without it, it is impossible to arrange one's toilet properly; but alas! during the creeping process it was broken into pieces. Fortunately I had several handkerchiefs, and with them I wiped away the blood from my hands and face caused by the nails in the barrel. We hear steps, and see leather boots, by which we recognize a warder in the passer-by. If only he accidentally bent to look at his feet, what a reward he would have received for his discovery! But he passed on, and another signal bade us to continue lying where we were.

"The minutes pass fearfully slow. Everything around seems quiet. Why, then, are we not allowed to go out? My comrade, however, whispers to me—

"'The signals cannot be misleading. Keep quiet.'

"Again steps from the opposite direction than those before.

"Two soldiers of the prison convoy pass by without noticing anything, thank God.

"I lie and think of the preacher's dictum, 'Vanity, vanity, all is vanity.' Suddenly we hear children's voices shouting, 'Catch him, catch him!' In a few seconds the little dog, which we recognized as that of the superintendent's children, came running and stopped just at the hole, looking at us with bewilderment. A very nasty incident indeed. Either he will commence at once barking, or the children will come to the spot of their own accord.

"We fixed our eyes upon the dog with intense expression, as we had heard stories of the possibility of silencing animals by such fixed looks. And, indeed, the dog stared for some seconds, smelt, and drew a breath of relief, as if to say, 'This is your business, gentlemen; it does not concern me at all,' then turned and ran back to the children.

"I always love the ringing voices and laughter of children, but on this occasion was only too glad to hear how they gradually died away in the distance.

"Again quiet, but in a few minutes again steps are heard. A water-carrier with his yoke and two empty pails passed by, and suddenly I shuddered

from a thought that on his return he will have his head bowed under his burden, with his eyes downwards, and is sure to notice the hole in the ground. A thousand similar thoughts flashed through my mind, the one prevailing thought being, How could it be otherwise? Was it not madness to believe that all the various circumstances would shape themselves favourably, and that, even after we had left the tunnel in broad daylight, no one would notice us from one direction or from another?

V

"But evidently this time the gods themselves willed it that nothing should happen to us. The water-carrier did not notice us on his way back. We felt relieved, everything became quiet again, but the signals continued mercilessly: 'Don't move.'

"I looked at my watch. We were lying and awaiting only about twenty to twenty-five minutes, which, however, seemed quite an eternity.

"Suddenly the signal changed. We could scarcely believe our eyes. Is it really possible? Yes, the signal unmistakably spoke: 'Everything is all right. Come out!'

"Like a shot we jumped out of the tunnel; then with slow steps, in an innocent manner, we walked away to a spot where a comrade was to meet us and hand me over money, a passport and a revolver. I

did not want to have these things with me beforehand, as in case of failure they would, of course, have fallen into the hands of the authorities."

Gershuni was now free, but, of course, far from being safe from a recapture at any moment. He had to pass a couple of miles over a snow-covered plain exposed in all directions and overlooked by the prison buildings on the hill, as well as by some twenty front windows of the houses of the governor and the overseers. But nothing happened. Crossing soon the hills in front, the two conspirators disappeared from sight, and now walked some distance until they met the sledge and driver, who had been waiting for them at an appointed spot from an early hour in the morning. During the last two months the same faithful driver had been awaiting at the same spot four times, as the escape was fixed for previous dates, and had each time to be given up on account of various unfavourable circumstances. Now Gershuni took the warmest farewell from the "accoucheur," who had to return to Akatui, and started on the still unsafe journey by roundabout ways, until he reached a town where friends were expecting him, having prepared beforehand a safe place for his hiding until the heat of the pursuit should be over.

Gershuni now perpared to leave by train for an eastern port, and thence to depart for Japan.

"I found it best," he says, "to dress myself as a

typical beggar, and when I looked at myself in the mirror I was simply delighted. A perfectly *natural* tramp, with the bundle of clothes at the back, etc., etc. At the station I was punched by a gendarme, who shouted at me, 'Out of the way, you dirty thing.' And oh! who would believe it, that there are circumstances in which a punch in your side gives you only pleasure, and raises your spirit with enthusiasm? During the journey, whenever some one swore at me as at the 'dirty beggar,' his words rang in my ears as heavenly music."

The journey by railway lasted some five days, and except for the peculiar "heavenly music" now and again bestowed upon the fugitive, everything went off smoothly. A dangerous moment was that of the embarkation on a Russian vessel for Nagasaki. For at the port special vigilance is kept over all passengers sailing for Japan, and it was here that two other political convicts, Muishkin and Khrushtsheff, were recaptured after they had covered about two thousand miles since their escape from the Kara prison in April 1882. Indeed, the danger had not passed for Gershuni all the time he remained on the Russian steamer, until he actually stepped on to Japanese soil.

VI

What happened at Akatui prison after this unparalleled escape is not less exciting reading. Gershuni's strategy of purposely showing himself to the chief warders just a few minutes before entering the barrel and making with them arrangements for "to-morrow" proved very successful, as they thought of him no more the whole day. Meanwhile preparations already begun previously were now completed for deceiving, if possible, the officer who was to make the evening verification of the cells. If Gershuni's absence could be somehow concealed at the evening roll-call, the fugitive would have at his disposal the whole night for his flight, and probably also the next day, as the morning verification is less severe than the evening one, and the concealment then was far easier.

To attain this object a Dutch cheese was procured, and one of the prisoners, evidently a born artist-sculptor, succeeded in making a bust of it shaped well enough into a resemblance of the head and face of our hero. This was attached to a dummy and properly placed on the fugitive's bed. It has been already stated that Gershuni was kept in one cell with several other political prisoners, who as a rule are wont to spend their leisure in loud and heated debates on various topics of politics, philo-

sophy, science and literature, gesticulating with their hands, and frequently getting into a real passion and shouting at the top of their voices. The prison authorities are quite accustomed to these noisy debates, do not interfere with them, and, indeed, now and again listen to them attentively themselves, being but human, and many political prisoners being, indeed, most fascinating orators.

Thus, just before the officer opened the door of the cell for the verification, a comrade arranged quite a ventriloquist scene beside Gershuni's bed, addressing the dummy in vehement debating tones—

"Don't you see, my dear Gregory Andreievitch, an eclipse of the sun affects the upper nebula in such a way that . . ."

One or two of the other comrades stood at the bed pretending to listen attentively to this astronomical argument, but the officer had no taste or time for such discussions, and, standing at the door, he only noticed that all the inmates were present. He then made the formal roll-call, every one by his name, to which it was duly replied, Gershuni's voice being more or less imitated by our improvised ventriloquist. The officer locked the door, and a sigh of relief was made by those present. A whole night gained at least, and probably the next day too—this was very important.

However, in about an hour another officer, who

was simply fond of having now and again a conversation with Gershuni, came into the cell with the most innocent object of spending a little time with his favourite prisoner. It was impossible to prevent him from approaching the bed and making the awful discovery.

What followed in the prison it is impossible adequately to describe. Gershuni was considered as the most talented, energetic, enterprising, daring, and therefore "the most dangerous," of all the members of "The Fighting Organization," and his escape, of all others, meant the utter disgrace of the new governor of the Akatui prison, who only just shortly before this event had introduced new stringent measures, and had even expelled the few private people living in the settlement close by, so that the prisoners could find no assistance from the outside. The whole night the prison was turned upside down, every cottage of the adjacent "free colony" was searched, but not the slightest trace of the escape and how it was effected could be found. To search the cellar in the courtyard of the house of the governor himself, of course, could not occur to any one. It was impossible to wire at once to the governor of the province, as for that purpose it was necessary to send a courier on horseback to Alexandrovsky, the nearest telegraph station, and the prison authorities still hoped that the fugitive might be found before long close

by. Thus they lost time, which was Gershuni's gain.

When, later on, the half-empty barrel with the pickled cabbage, gutta-percha tubes and two round holes in the bottom were discovered, the general belief of the prison authorities was that this was arranged only with the object of diverting attention from the real means of escape, which remained a mystery yet for a long time, until the broken foundation of the cellar and the tunnel were at last *accidentally* discovered.

The central police department in St. Petersburg, on learning of this escape, immediately wired all over Russia to governors of provinces, heads of gendarmerie, rural chiefs, frontier guards, etc., giving a full description of the fugitive, with his characteristic slight lameness, and enjoining his immediate arrest. The result was that four Gershunis were at once simultaneously captured and arrested in four different places, the real Gershuni being at that time already comfortably ensconced in a house in Nagasaki with Dr. Russel, a famous Russian revolutionist, one time Senator and President of the Havaian Parliament, and afterwards for several years editor in Japan of the Russian revolutionary journal *Volia* (Liberty).

A noteworthy feature of the whole story of the escape is the fact that the preparations were well

known to all the inmates of the Akatui prison, including the depraved common criminals. Yet none of them betrayed the secret, for which, no doubt, a big reward would have been given.

And what is one to think or say of the "accoucheur" and the other "politicals" who now, having their punishment considerably reduced and being allowed to settle in the "free colony" outside the prison, have once more voluntarily risked their very lives in digging the tunnel to the cellar, and even passing through it twice, as the "accoucheur" did on the very day of the escape, with but the too ample likelihood of being killed themselves along with the comrade they wanted to save for the good of "the cause"!

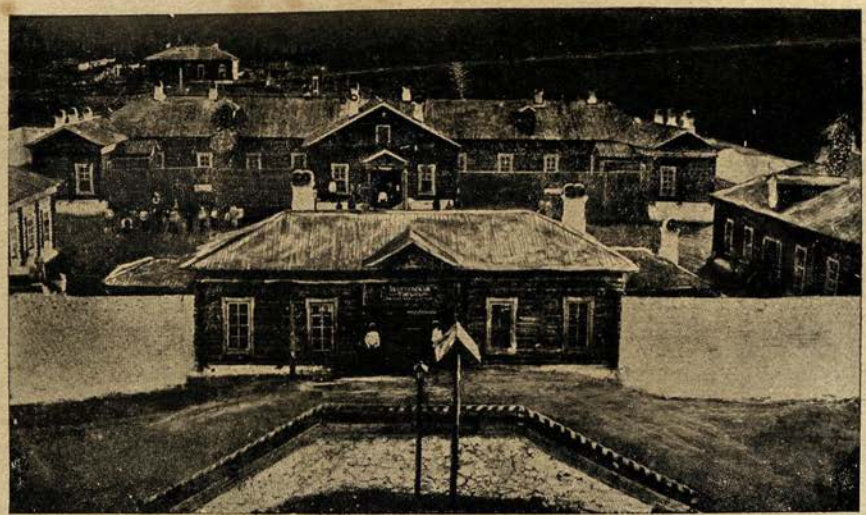
Truly, whatever one may think of the cause itself, one cannot fail to be struck by the extraordinary characters of those who champion and are ready to lay down their lives for it.

VII

From Japan Gershuni went to the United States of America, where he was enthusiastically fêted in many places, and where he succeeded in forming many committees in aid of the Russian revolutionary cause. He then returned to Europe, continuing to

devote all his energies to the same cause, and writing a remarkable book of his experiences in the fortress of Petro-Pavlovsk, in that of Schlusselburg, etc. His health, however, already much impaired by a whole series of privations and almost superhuman feats, soon gave way, and he died in March 1908 in the very prime of life, when so much was expected from his heroic spirit, devotion and promising literary talent.

His funeral took place in Paris on Sunday, March 29, and was described by the French papers as the most impressive and pathetic of the kind ever witnessed in the French capital. Quite 5,000 delegates from numerous Russian, French, German, English, Italian, Belgian, American and other societies accompanied the procession, and some 150 wreaths and numerous telegrams of sympathy were received from all parts. M. Lepine, the Prefect of Police, intended to forbid this procession, but he received assurances that no disturbance of any kind or revolutionary chants would be allowed on the way through the Streets to the Montparnasse Cemetery, where Gershuni was interred beside the grave of another famous Russian revolutionary leader, Professor Peter Lavroff. As a matter of fact, perfect order reigned throughout the proceedings, the Russians marching clasping one another's hands, according to Slavonic usage.



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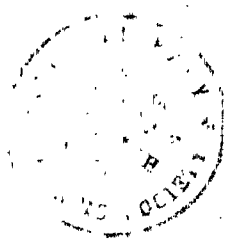
AKATUI PRISON, EASTERN SIBERIA

This historical Russian prison, situated in a picturesque and wild part of the Trans-Baikal, is next in importance to the Schlusselburg Fortress from the number of "politicals" confined in it. The above building was erected in 1889 to accommodate 85 prisoners, but is at present overcrowded, containing nearly double that number. The native semi-savage Buriats are paid 35 roubles for the capture of an escaped common convict and 75 roubles for a "political"!

The building outside in the background to the left is the residence of the governor, and near by is the cellar from whence Gershuni made his escape.

Gershuni was one of those loving and richly endowed natures of extraordinary energy, initiative and daring which in most civilized countries lead their possessors to laurels. In Russia, alas! their careers mostly end in prisons and in a crown of thorns.



CHAPTER FIVE

TRAITOR OR MARTYR?

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TRAITOR OR MARTYR?

THE tragic death of Father George Gapon, the hero of the people's demonstration in St. Petersburg on the historical "Bloody Sunday" of January 22, 1905, has only just now come to light with all its gruesome details, and we must say at once that we stand aghast at these revelations, more inclined to think that the famous priest became but a victim of revolutionary blunder, fanaticism and intolerance, skilfully exploited by the Czar's "Agents-Provocateurs," than to admit that he really betrayed the people's cause and fully deserved his fate. Our suspicion and doubts have been awakened by no other evidence than that of Gapon's accusers themselves, who now endeavour to throw the responsibility for this murder upon one another's shoulders. The whole affair and the revolutionary indictment are so obscure and complicated that it would require quite a volume to make clear to outsiders the facts of the case and the process of reasoning which made the Revolutionary Committee pass a death sentence upon Gapon, and then put all the responsibility

upon the man who actually executed the sentence. But we shall try to state here the chief points of the case as clearly and as briefly as possible, and explain why the evidences of the revolutionists against Gapon seem to us disputable altogether, and of such a nature as would never be considered sufficient to condemn a man to death if the case were tried by a proper court with a representative jury.

The story of Gapon, his "treachery," his "trial," and his execution, is told minutely in 87 pages in the revolutionary magazine, *Builoe* ("The Past"), edited by V. Bourtzeff. The author of the story is a certain P. Rutenberg, an engineer by profession, and a member of the Russian party of "Socialists-Revolutionists." He is the denunciator of Gapon's crimes to the Central Committee, and at the same time he is practically a member of the "Tribunal," and it is he also who lures the "culprit" to a secret place and there hands him over to several men who listen to Gapon's "confessions" from their hiding-place and who at once hang him on the spot without allowing him to say anything in self-defence, whilst he, Rutenberg, walks out of the room saying that he is unable to witness the scene of execution. And now this same Rutenberg, the accuser, judge, and executioner of Father Gapon, appears also in the capacity of historian of his own bloody deed, which he tells with an air of self-righteousness, evidently expecting the full confi-

dence and sympathy of his readers and the grateful recognition of contemporaries and posterity for having executed a "traitor" to the people's cause.

What at once must strike the impartial reader is the fact that throughout the lengthy narrative Rutenberg reproduces his conversations with Gapon mostly verbatim, and quotes the latter's own words and explanations in the manner of fiction-writers when reproducing the intimate conversations of their imaginary heroes and heroines. If even Rutenberg took down Gapon's words on the spot in shorthand notes, there could not be any guarantee for their absolute accuracy, for have we not frequently opportunities of convincing ourselves of the inaccuracy of shorthand reports of speeches at public meetings? But after the lapse of several years, to reproduce Gapon's intimate conversations as if he had spoken them into a gramophone does not inspire us with confidence that the narrator fully realizes his responsibility and the necessity of strict accuracy in dealing with such a tragic historical subject.

To characterize Mr. Rutenberg himself and his own petty and narrow way of looking upon revolutionary propriety, it is sufficient to quote one incident intended by the narrator to discredit Gapon in the eyes of the revolutionary party. Mr. Rutenberg tells us that when Gapon after his escape arrived in Paris, he "had gone through himself and arranged for others an improper (*nepristoinuiu*) spectacle."

On the morning of his interview with Clemenceau, Gapon put on a fashionable white shirt! "By this time he had already developed a refined taste in outward apparel," comments Mr. Rutenberg. A similar sign of Gapon's vanity and moral fall we are asked to see in the fact that on his arrival at Geneva, passing a stationery shop, he was attracted by an illustrated postcard, which was a photo of himself, and stopped to look at it. "I did not hinder him," tells Rutenberg; "in fact, I could not hinder him, so struck was I by his attitude. So we remained on the spot for some minutes, he looking on his photo and I looking on him."

What unpardonable crimes, indeed, to be recorded in the pages of history, designed to prepare the reader for the moral fall of the great hero! And now let us reconstitute the main and serious facts of the whole case as we knew them from various previous sources, and now also from the narrative of Rutenberg himself.

Gapon first of all was a priest of the Established Russian Church, a Reformer, and a most devoted friend of the people, with a marvellous influence upon them, who went literally to death at his inspiring word and example. He showed such extraordinary organizing capacities, as no Russian revolutionary leader of recent time has yet shown, and the success of his "Working Men's Union," with its numerous branches, was largely due to his ability

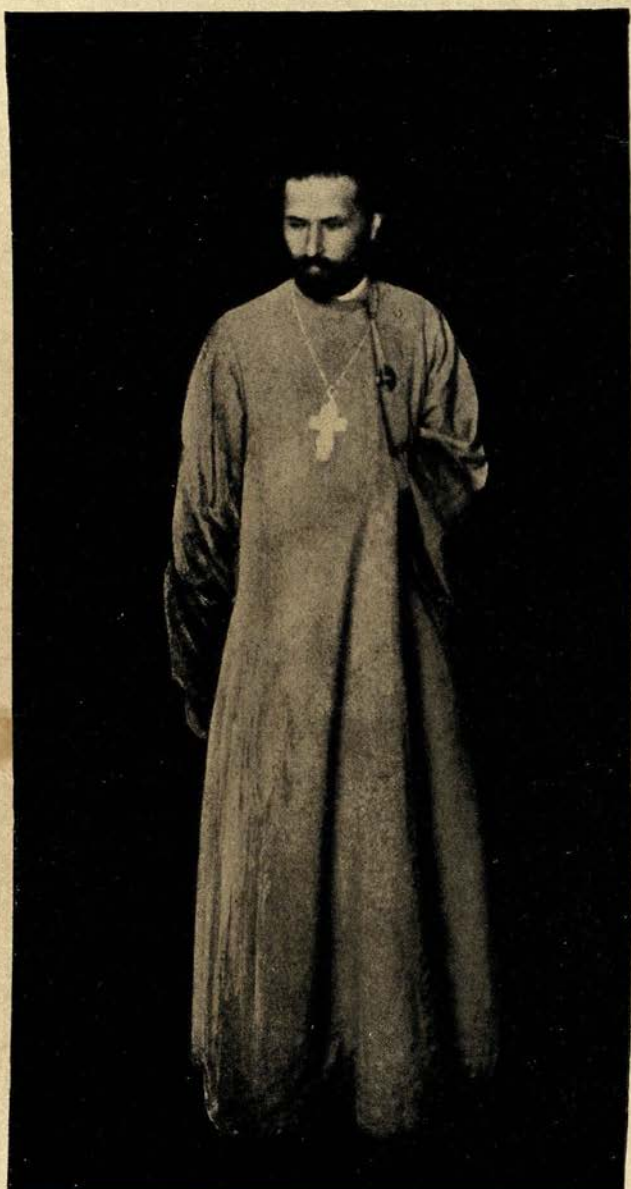
in allaying the suspicions of the authorities, and even in making them help him in his work. Of his relations with the authorities, and with the notorious police organizing agent, Zoubatoff, who formed working men's societies with the object of keeping them under Government control, Gapon tells us in his autobiography quite frankly, and explains that disgusting as these relations were to him personally, they were unavoidable, if the working men were to be organized at all, and then led in the right direction. He intentionally misled the authorities from the very beginning in the interests of the people's cause. There can be no two opinions as to his sincerity up till the great crisis, seeing that he went at the head of the procession on the fatal day of January 22, after being informed that the troops were everywhere placed to prevent the procession and that they were supplied with real cartridges. People fell all around him, and he escaped unhurt as if by a miracle. His manifestoes to the people after the massacres of that day breathe the deepest feelings of shame, horror and suffering for them and undying hatred for the Czar, his "cursed progeny," and all his hirelings.

All the time Gapon was organizing and leading his working men, the so-called revolutionists proper, *i. e.* the members of the more or less recognized parties of "Social Democrats" and "Socialists-Revolutionists," took up a hostile attitude towards

him, as towards a kind of suspicious revolutionary upstart, who acted quite independently of them and their "programmes," and did not ask for their sanction and blessing. In fact, at the meetings of the Gaponian working men the "revolutionists" were driven out, and on several occasions were even thrashed. It was only after "Bloody Sunday" that the "revolutionists" were compelled reluctantly to acknowledge the sincerity of Gapon with a feeling of wounded *amoure propre* that it was not they, "the old professed revolutionists," but a new-comer, who had raised the masses of the people and led them to the grandest Russian political demonstration of recent time.[1]

This underlying moral grudge and petty jealousy

[1] Of these jealousies, pettinesses, and foolishnesses of Russian "revolutionists" the writer had much experience, even in England, during his most arduous work to win English sympathy and material support for the Russian Revolutionary cause! At a public meeting in London, addressed by the writer, enthusiastically applauded by the English audience, the only indignant objector was a noted Russian "Revolutionist," and frequent contributor to the London Socialist weekly, *Justice*. His complaint was not against anything the speaker had said, but against his very right to speak for the Russian Revolution, not being a member of any Revolutionary party, and never having been imprisoned in Russia! The complainant claimed that he and his comrades alone were the "real" Revolutionists, being the rightful successors of the extinct "Narod naia Volia" (the "People's Will Party"). Roman Catholics please note that there is a doctrine of "Apostolic Succession" amongst Russian Nihilists too, and that occasionally they also condemn, and even execute, a political "Nonconformist" *ad majorem Dei gloriam.*



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THE ASSASSINATED FATHER GAPON

against Gapon is noticeable in the whole attitude of the revolutionists towards him even after his flight from Russia, when in France and Switzerland he laboured for the unification or federation of all revolutionary parties and sections. Thus, according to Rutenberg, the well-known leader of the Social Democratic party, George Plekhanoff, refused to take any part in the Conference suggested to discuss the projected federation, simply on the ground that he considered Gapon "not authoritative and competent enough to take the initiative in such an enterprise"!

The Central Committee of the "Socialists-Revolutionists," however, accepted Gapon as a member of the party, and Rutenberg took upon himself the task of teaching him his new duties. Gapon was no longer to work independently, he was to enter into no negotiations without the preliminary advice and sanction of the Central Committee. The Committee considered Gapon not well up in revolutionary literature and politics and proposed to him that he should proceed "to read and learn."

"But," says Rutenberg, "Gapon took it into his head that he can be only the 'leader' of the revolution, and by no means merely a simple member of the revolutionary party. Naturally he was not disposed to learn anything, and made a series of steps which placed the party in an equivocal position owing to the fact that he was looked upon as a

member of the Party. So he was told to leave the Party."

Such is Rutenberg's version of Gapon's relations with the Central Committee, and of his having proved a bad pupil, not wanting to learn from the latter's wisdom and experience. In the light of recent revelations, showing that the whole Central Revolutionary Committee was as a child's plaything and tool in the hands of that great police spy, Eugen Azeff, the impartial reader will judge for himself how much credence can be placed in the sound judgment of that Committee in its attitude towards Gapon, or in the whole estimate of Gapon's personality by Rutenberg and his comrades, all the more so as Rutenberg does not choose to tell definitely what were hitherto Gapon's incriminating steps, but alludes to them only in a mysterious way.

However, later on, Rutenberg throws some light on the disagreement between Gapon and the Central Committee. He says—

"Gapon asked me to leave the Socialists-Revolutionists and to join him. He became convinced that all the revolutionists are Talmudists,[1] and don't know the practical side of life. . . . I tried to argue with him in the old comradely way, but it was

[1] Talmudists=Ecclesiastical students of the sacred Babylonian and Palestinian rabbinical code "Talmud," which is full of hair-splitting theories, metaphysics, and frequently absurd sophistry contrary to common reason and practical sense.

useless. We looked upon things in a quite different light, and our ways parted."

This passage gives, indeed, the key to the whole situation, and shows simply that Gapon had his own views of how to conduct the revolutionary agitation, and would not submit to the dictates of the Socialists-Revolutionists. From our personal knowledge of present-day Russian revolutionists, we too look upon them as unpractical "Talmudists," as theorists and metaphysicians whose idealism, soaring on the heights of the unknown and distant future, blinds their eyes to the things immediately before them on earth, whose zeal frequently surpasses their discretion and defeats their own ends. That this is so is proved by the very fact of the disaster that has befallen all recent revolutionary enterprises, which no Azeffs could have wrecked, if the revolutionists had not alienated all other constitutional elements by their Socialistic demands and if they had not incessantly quarrelled between themselves and taken up an intolerant attitude towards any one holding different views.

However, Rutenberg brings against Gapon direct charges of "treachery," and we shall next see whether any unbiased mind can really accept as authentic his evidence that the popular hero of the St. Petersburg "Red Sunday" had suddenly become a traitor to the cause of the people he loved so well, and this without any motive whatever to

show how the working men's guardian angel could all of a sudden become their most fiendish enemy.

From the lengthy, frequently abrupt and confused, account by Rutenberg of the story of Gapon and his alleged "treachery," we gather the following bare and undoubtedly true facts—

After the promulgation of the Constitutional Manifesto, in October 1905, Gapon returned secretly to Russia. His influential friends, the well-known leader of the Constitutional-Democratic party, Peter Struve, and the prominent member of the Social-Democratic party, Matyushinsky, who was also for some years a Socialist-Revolutionist, petitioned Count Witte, the then Premier, to pardon Gapon. (Oh! the irony of it, seeing that Gapon did nothing wrong, and that it was the Czar who ordered the shooting of the people.)

The Count was very anxious about Gapon's fate, as M. Durnovo, the then Home Secretary, insisted on Gapon's arrest, and he, Witte, therefore offered the latter to leave St. Petersburg. If he did so, the Count would allow again the opening of the eleven branches of the Working Men's Organization, which were closed after "Bloody Sunday," and he would, besides, reimburse to them 30,000 roubles, as compensation for the damage caused them in January of the same year. Besides, the Count promised that in about six weeks' time Gapon could again return to Russia, and his position would be then

once more legalized. Gapon held a committee meeting of the Working Men's Organization, at which it was resolved to accept Witte's offer. Gapon left Russia, and in his absence Matyushinsky received the 30,000 roubles, of which he handed over to the working men only 7,000, and absconded with the rest!

The eleven branches of the Working Men's Organization were opened only for a short time, their closing being ordered again by Durnovo, owing to the revolutionary rising in Moscow. When Gapon returned to Russia he was included in the number of political offenders amnestied, and could now work openly for the Working Men's Organization, which, however, remained closed. It is, properly speaking, from this moment that Gapon's negotiations with the Government, and the notorious head of the Secret Political Police, Ratchkovsky, commenced. It is quite clear, even from Rutenberg's account, that on the one hand the Government desired to conciliate Gapon and utilize his influence upon the working men that he might again lead them for the betterment of their own purely economic position, but quite outside and independently of the political and Socialistic parties, which were thereby to be considerably weakened. On the other hand, Gapon conceived a grand plan of utilizing this attitude of the Government in favour of the revolution by organizing again the working men, and training them

this time for an armed rising, profiting by the experience of the "Bloody Sunday" of January 22, 1905, when, without any weapons, they were quite helpless, and utterly unable to resist the Government troops. Gapon thus found it absolutely necessary to be on very good terms with the Government in the interests of the people's cause, and to get even financial help from the Government, as Government money, he declared, was but the people's money. Ratchkovsky was the intermediary between Gapon and Durnovo, and the latter demanded that Gapon should state his views in writing, and express his loyalty to the Czar, who otherwise could not be approached on the subject of the reopening of the Working Men's Organization with Gapon at their head. Gapon wrote his letter to Durnovo, expressing his loyalty to the Czar, but affirming at the same time that he remained loyal also to the cause of the people. Thereupon, Durnovo declared that he did not believe in the sincerity of Gapon's repentance, and even said to Ratchkovsky, "You are a fool. Don't you perceive how Gapon is leading you by the nose?"

It is self-evident that the game was played mutually, Gapon believing that he could deceive the Government, and the latter hoping that it would get to know all the secrets of the Revolutionary movement from Gapon. How Gapon held himself in his dealings with the officials is seen from the

interview he had with M. Lopukhin, ex-Director of the Police Department, and now an exile in Siberia for his sympathetic revelations to the famous revolutionary, Vladimir Bourtzeff. Lopukhin asked Gapon to tell him what he knew, to throw light on the real situation, promising that he would not communicate what he heard to any one else. To this Gapon replied—

"If I tell you what I know, I should give away my living soul, everything that constituted my strength hitherto, and I should remain like Samson, shorn of his hair."

This noble sentiment shows us the real Gapon, even when he was dealing with the Government, and at the very time that the revolutionists declared him a traitor. The words are quoted by Rutenberg himself, who does not throw any doubt upon this incident told him by Gapon, but simply volunteers the following arbitrary and prejudiced commentary—

"What else Gapon told Lopukhin during the long and tasty dinner, and how Lopukhin still succeeded in cutting off Gapon's hair and playing the part of a Delilah, I don't know."

According to Rutenberg, Ratchkovsky asked Gapon to try to seduce him, Rutenberg, who was well known as a leading member of the Socialist-Revolutionary party. Gapon told Rutenberg this quite plainly, and said there would be no harm, anyhow, if Rutenberg had an interview with Ratch-

kovsky, and pretended to reveal to him a revolutionary plot for which Ratchkovsky would pay him 25,000 roubles. Rutenberg states that Gapon asserted that there was nothing wrong in taking the money in advance, and then either disappear and tell Ratchkovsky nothing, or reveal to him the names of the plotters, but at the same time informing the latter that they might escape, or simply take the money, and kill both Ratchkovsky and General Gerasimoff, his right-hand man in the Secret Police service.

This proposal of Gapon, Rutenberg considered as sure evidence that the hero of the St. Petersburg "Bloody Sunday" had become a traitor to the people's cause, and entered the secret service of the Russian Government! Even accepting Rutenberg's own version of the whole story, can any sane man come to such a conclusion? Rutenberg, however, constituted himself somehow the guardian and controller of Gapon's conscience and political career, simply because he *happened* to be by his side on the fatal Sunday in St. Petersburg, and helped Gapon to escape the massacre by cutting off his long priestly hair and aiding otherwise in his disguise. He reported Gapon's "treachery" to the Central Revolutionary Committee, asking them whether he should have the interview with Ratchkovsky and thus ascertain the correctness of Gapon's statements. The Committee, at that time guided by the famous "Agent-Provocateur," Azeff, who was Ratchkovsky's

own immediate subordinate, authorized Rutenberg to have the interview with Ratchkovsky. According to Rutenberg's statement, now denied by the Committee itself, he was also authorized to kill both Ratchkovsky and Gapon on the spot if the latter was present at the interview, or to kill Gapon alone if the interview with Ratchkovsky had confirmed his guilt.

Azeff was, indeed, the chief member of the Central Revolutionary Committee, who conducted the whole Ratchkovsky-Gapon affair, and it is clear that Ratchkovsky was all the time minutely informed of the whole plot, and of the murderous intentions of both Gapon and of Rutenberg, who was coming to interview him, Ratchkovsky, to get from him 25,000 roubles, and to assassinate him there and then! That Ratchkovsky did know of the conspiracy is quite evident from the very fact that he duly made an appointment to meet Rutenberg at a certain restaurant, but instead of coming himself, he simply placed there several spies to take full observations of the terrorist, but with instructions not to arrest him on the spot, and even not to follow him outside into the street, evidently wishing to keep up the game with Gapon for some time yet. All this we are told by Rutenberg himself, who duly appeared at the appointed restaurant, asking for the private room of "Mr. Ivanoff," but was kept waiting a considerable time, until finally

told that "evidently Mr. Ivanoff is not here to-night."

We have seen that Rutenberg accused Gapon of "treachery" to the people's cause simply because the latter had communications with Ratchkovsky, the head of the Secret Police, though Gapon emphatically explained that he entered into them solely for revolutionary purposes, and though he even proposed to Rutenberg the assassination of Ratchkovsky.

Now, in the first place, quite a number of Russian revolutionists have purposely entered at various periods the service of the Secret Political Police and even pretended to play the part of "Agents-Provocateurs" in order to help the revolutionary cause. Some of them have really rendered most valuable services to their brethren by giving timely warnings of forthcoming arrests, by revealing the names and personalities of real "Agents-Provocateurs," by abstracting or copying secret official documents, by helping the escape of prisoners, and in numerous other ways. So frequent have become, within the last few years, cases of Russian revolutionists entering into the service of the police, that M. Vladimir Bourtzeff, now famous for his repeated exposures of real "Agents-Provocateurs," has found it necessary to appeal in the last issue of his periodical, *Obshtshee Dielo* ("The Common Cause"), to his comrades to abstain from this practice, as more

harmful than useful to the revolutionary cause. His standpoint is, that in order to gain the confidence of the police, the revolutionist must first of all render the police some substantial service by betraying some revolutionary secret, so that even with the best intentions more harm than good may be done to the revolutionists.

This is, of course, a personal opinion of M. Bourtzeff with which one may or may not agree. Many think, on the contrary, that if the Government has succeeded in crushing the revolution by planting spies in numerous revolutionary circles and thus being *au courant* of all revolutionary undertakings, the revolutionists, on their part, are not only justified, but are obliged, in the interests simply of self-preservation, to act likewise, and plant themselves as widely as possible in the Government services, so that they may at least paralyse and check the activity of the Government spies. As to more harm than good likely to result from such revolutionary enterprise, that, of course, depends on the personal cleverness and skill of the individual venturing upon such a dangerous career; anyhow, he or she risking in this way their own liberty and life itself must certainly be looked upon as heroes and martyrs for the people's cause.

Anyhow, there have been and there are Russian revolutionists who sincerely believe that they can best serve the people's cause by working within the

enemy's camp. M. Bourtzeff himself quotes the extraordinary career of the revolutionary Klietotchnikoff, who served as a clerk in the Police Department and supplied his comrades for a long time with secret information, until he was found out and thrown into prison, where he died. M. Bourtzeff admits Klietotchnikoff's valuable services and real martyrdom, but makes the distinction between simply serving as a clerk in the Police Department and being employed by the police as "Agent-Provocateur," which rôle, he declares, is not permissible even for revolutionary purposes. Against this opinion we have that of the Central Committee of the Socialists-Revolutionists, who only recently sanctioned the resolve of a revolutionist, Alexander Petroff, to enter the police service as an "Agent-Provocateur," and by whose bomb, on the 8th of December 1909, the Chief of the Secret Police in St. Petersburg, Colonel Karpoff, was blown to pieces, as fully told in *The Anglo-Russian* for January 1910.

To charge Gapon with "treachery" to the people's cause simply because he had negotiations with the head of the Secret Police is, therefore, absurd. Besides, Rutenberg himself entered into negotiations with Ratchkovsky, and went to meet him at the "Restaurant Content," to receive the 25,000 roubles agreed upon under the pretence that he would become an "Agent-Provocateur," and this

he did with the sanction of the Central Revolutionary Committee! Then, in the name of common sense and simple logic, we ask, how can Rutenberg himself play the double rôle of revolutionary and "Agent-Provocateur," though even for a single moment, believing himself to serve thereby the revolutionary cause, and at the same time condemn and actually kill Gapon for doing the same thing with the same revolutionary purpose in view? Can Rutenberg prove in any way that his intention of having an interview with Ratchkovsky and receiving money from him—an interview which did not actually take place simply because Ratchkovsky outwitted him and did not keep the appointment—was honest, sincere, and in the interests of the people's cause, but that Gapon's interviews with the same Ratchkovsky were dishonest and treacherous? We, for one, have more confidence in Gapon's real devotion to the people's cause, in his sincere desire to outwit the authorities, than we have in Rutenberg's righteousness, wisdom, self-constituted authority and claims to judge and kill the people's hero of St. Petersburg's "Bloody Sunday" of January 22, 1905.

Apart from the above considerations, Rutenberg himself makes it quite clear that it was the notorious police agent Azeff, at the time the trusted leader of the Central Revolutionary Committee, who inspired and directed the whole affair of the assassination of

Gapon, that the Committee as a whole immediately declined any responsibility for this crime, and let it be understood that the assassination was entirely Rutenberg's own affair. The latter publishes some of his correspondence with the Committee, and bitterly accuses it of making false statements. We are not in a position to know which side tells the truth, but the chief fact remains that it was Azeff and his immediate chief, Ratchkovsky, the head of the Secret Political Police, who cunningly planned to kill Gapon, and to kill him doubly, physically and morally, by the hands of revolutionists, as a traitor to the Russian people condemned to death by the Central Revolutionary Committee.

Now, had Gapon really become a traitor to the people's cause and offered his services to the Government against the revolutionists, how could that Government have so cunningly arranged his assassination through Ratchkovsky and Azeff? Has anybody ever heard of any Government killing its own trusted agents?

From the whole story only certain facts are quite clear and indisputable, viz. that Gapon could not agree with the revolutionists, that he had his own views as to the best methods of making the people rise in open rebellion, that he still enjoyed to the very end the confidence of the working men, and hoped, sooner or later, to stand at the head of a

popular national movement, organized by himself independently of the revolutionary parties which are mostly drawn from the educated classes. The revolutionists rejected his plans and leadership, and in that they might have been right or wrong. But to disagree with them is one thing, and to be condemned for that to death as a traitor to the people's cause is quite another thing.

It must also be taken into consideration that we have now the whole story of Gapon's "treachery" only as told by his accuser and assassin, that it is he who now publishes the alleged conversations, and all the time makes Gapon speak and betray himself in the way heroes speak in imaginary stories invented by writers of novels. But even Rutenberg's own version of the story is not given us in full, and some passages in his memoirs are altogether omitted and marked by the editor of the *Builoe* "not for publication," as, for instance, two points on page 106. The accuracy of the gruesome details in the description of the scene of the execution of Gapon, as given by an eye-witness, also cannot be relied upon. For, from photographs taken on the spot of the body of Gapon on its discovery by the police, it is seen that he was not simply quickly and "mercifully" hanged, but was evidently set upon by savage hooligans, who mutilated his face almost beyond recognition, one of his eyes being knocked out

and hanging down, whilst his nose was broken and turned aside. These gruesome particulars we borrow from a writer in the progressive Russian journal, *Mir* ("The World"), who, too, doubts the truth of the whole story of Rutenberg. He states that the revolutionists began to take up a suspicious attitude towards Rutenberg for his intimate relations with Gapon after they had rejected the latter, and that Rutenberg undertook the assassination of Gapon in order to re-establish the confidence of the revolutionists in himself.

Such are a few only of the most distressing incidents in the modern phase of Russia's long martyrdom under the heel of Czarism which for the sake of its own baneful existence resorts to all possible nefarious methods, demoralizes the whole nation, and vitiates the whole political atmosphere by creating Ratchkovskys and Azeffs, to whom the lives of Gapons, Rutenbergs and of thousands of others are but as playthings to be ruthlessly destroyed at their will and pleasure and for the safety of their paymaster. For the moment certainly the Czar, Ratchkovsky, Azeff and Co. are triumphing and joyful over the graves of Russia's noblest sons and daughters who have fallen in the battle for their country's freedom, and if a Czar can manage to maintain his despotism during his own lifetime, that is just as much as can be wished for by any

despot. What is to him future history and the future destiny of his country, or even of his own throne and dynasty? Has not a great French Czar expressed the innermost political creed and the actual patriotic sentiment of all Czars by proclaiming cynically and openly: "Aprez nous le deluge!"?

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VLADIMIR BOURTZEFF

The famous Russian Revolutionary leader, editor of *Builoe* (The Past) and *Obshtchee Dielo* (The Common Cause), and author of several Russian historical works. It was he who unmasked the notorious Azeff, and a number of other Russian agents-provocateurs in Europe and America.

(*See p.* 188)

CHAPTER SIX

CREATION IN REVOLT

SOME LIGHT ON SOCIAL INEQUALITY

CHAPTER SIX

CREATION IN REVOLT

"And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good."—*Genesis* i. 31.

BEFORE the Eternal One created the permanent world, He made a model of all its potentialities and called to His presence all kinds and species of existing beings, asking them whether they were content and happy.

"No," said the cobble-stone, "I am discontented and miserable. The diamond shines in the crowns of kings and queens, and is revered by all mankind, who will even fight with one another for its possession, while I am good only for paving the roads, to be trodden under the feet of man and beast, and never hear any expression of appreciation or gratitude."

"Neither can I be contented and happy, my Lord and Master," said the moss, "when I look up from the lowliness of my position to the height and grandeur of the oak-tree, which Thou hast made an incarnation of strength and vitality. Why should I remain just the very image of humility and weakness?"

The thorn then came forward from the crowd present, and said—

"Where is Thy justice, O Maker of the Universe? Beauty of form and colour, and delicacy of perfume Thou hast bestowed on the rose, and all poets sing her praise, as an emblem of love and loveliness, whereas I am only a term of reproach, an image of desolation, seldom used even as firewood to cheer man at his hearth."

"And I, too," bitterly complained the frog, "can never be content and happy when I hear the nightingale's divine song enchanting man and beast, whereas at the very sound of my croak people hasten to stop their ears, and shiver at the very thought of touching my body."

Then came in endless succession other kinds of created beings, each discontented with its lot and wanting to be something else. Thus, the sprats and minnows wanted to become whales, the field-mouse an elephant, the snail, tortoise and the sloth wanted to run as fast as the reindeer, the insect to soar as the eagle, the stagnant water pool to turn into a Niagara Fall; little hillocks envied the Alpine mountains, and invisible stars wanted to shine as brilliantly as the sun.

And finally there stepped forward all sorts and conditions of man, each setting forth his grievance and demanding redress. The village blacksmith wanted to become as skilled and inventive as Edison; unknown writers sighed after the fame of Shakespeare and Goethe; the chimney-sweep

modestly asked for the position of a bath-shampooer, and the boot-maker wanted to become a tailor, whilst the tailor wanted to become a shoe-maker, carpenter, watchmaker, anything but a tailor. Needless to say, all the poor wanted to become rich, nobody wanted to toil and labour; some asked for more holidays, whilst those already enjoying endless holidays were sick at heart and longing for some occupation, for some purpose and object in life. In a word, from the lowest to the highest, from the peasant's hovel to the king's palace, there was not a single human being absolutely content and happy. Even they who did not want any change in their own lives, wanted to change the position of others, to reform and improve the world, and were unhappy because they could not remodel the universe according to their own plans and ideas.

The last to complain against crying injustice calling forth the general sympathy of those assembled was the plain-looking woman, who, with tears in her eyes, said—

"Father of Mankind and Source of Justice and Love, who careth for all the Creation alike, I would be content and satisfied with everything, if only Thou didst not deprive me of the one thing necessary for the happiness of a woman—the love of man. Even the poorest, most ignorant girl, if she is endowed with physical beauty and grace, attracts every one's attention and admiration, and is happy

in the love she receives and gives, while I am passed unnoticed and meet with cold, cruel response whenever I venture to manifest in any way my longings for love and happiness. Tell me, O Father, how I have deserved my fate."

Thus the whole Creation was in revolt against the Creator, particularly the human race, the vast majority of whom wanted also to know the nature of the Creator Himself, His own origin, the mystery of life, and the final object of all existence. So absorbingly did these problems engross, fascinate and torture the human mind that large numbers have sacrificed all personal worldly possessions and pleasures, have isolated themselves in wildernesses, undergone all kinds of self-mortification, and indulged in constant meditation, in the faint hope only of lifting the veil to rapturously contemplate the glory of eternal truth. And now being in the awful presence of the Almighty, but unable to see Him, they all humbly prayed that He might reveal His Divine self and satisfy the longings of their hearts.

The Creator sympathetically listened to all complaints and supplications until the last of them was heard. Then with an expression of sadness He said—

"Minerals, plants, animals, mankind, stars, and all other created beings of Mine! Like sparks from

a source of fire, I have let you all emanate from my Divine Self to return to Me in the fullness of time. In My wisdom which passes your understanding, I have decreed an endless variety of shape, colour, and condition, of the same vital substance, but now you are all discontent and murmuring. I repent therefore of my intention to create the visible world, and will call the powers of destruction to again turn everything into chaos and nothingness."

And as He spake, there approached the Spirit of Destruction, and at the waving of His Hand the sun stopped in its course, its lustre began to fade, and stars crowded together in confusion and wonder. The North sent forth its icy breath, the birds ceased singing, and wood and field changed their colour. The oceans began to rise in clouds of vapour, and mountain tops to shake and sink. The valleys trembled, riven asunder, and flames burst from the bosom of the earth. The sluice gates of Heaven opened, thunder followed thunder, and water, fire, and pillars of smoke and brimstone mingled together. The abyss widened its mouth, and formless monsters, creeping, flying and hissing, filled the air. . . . And as chaos and darkness began to envelop the world, gloom and terror struck all existing beings, and cries of despair and wailing were heard on all sides. Then the whole Creation repented and from all breasts a voice of

supplication ascended to the Throne of the Almighty, saying—

"O Spirit of Life and Father of Mercy! We have sinned in our pride and offended Thine all-wise designs. Thy world is beautiful with all its lights and shadows, though we cannot understand all Thy ways. Spare us our existence, and let Thy Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

Then the Maker of the World repented in His Heart that He had wanted to destroy His Creation, and at the sign of His Hand the darkness stepped back, the tempest ceased, the mountains stood firm, and the sun resumed its brilliance and warmth. And as Nature was again jubilant with the joy of life, the Creator said—

"In My sight there is no beginning and end, no life and death, beauty and ugliness, high and low, for I am with and within all of you, in the cobble-stone and in the diamond, in the frog and night-ingale, moss and oak-tree, thorn and rose. If all stones were diamonds, all thorns roses, every man a prophet, and every woman beautiful, there would be nothing and nobody to admire, to delight, nobody to ennoble, to uplift. Creatures of the moment, you all form but parts of one body divine, of one cease-lessly rotating circle, going up, coming down, taking each other's place in turn, as moon follows moon, and season succeeds season. There is no finiteness

of space and time before Me. You are atoms of one and the same universal Whole, which, like the kaleidoscope, with every turn, with every moment produces new forms, new shapes, new combinations of colour. The carbon of the black coal crystallizes into the radiant diamond, the substance of the moss ascends to the top of the oak-tree, grains of sand and drops of water go to make up the mighty mountains and oceans, just as little rivulets swell the glorious water-fall, plain-looking mothers give birth to beautiful daughters, and talent and genius spring up from the humblest stock. Let then each of you take pride in the existence of the other, for everything is co-ordinate in the general harmony of Nature for the good of all, like the various organs of the same human body, or the numerous particles, large and small, of one gigantic engine. But thou, pearl of my Creation, Man, I have given thee above any other being this spirit of inquiry and discontent that thou mayest incessantly seek to progress thyself, and to improve and beautify the earth. Go, then, forth from perfection to perfection, from holiness to holiness, remembering that thou art but bone of the bone, and flesh of the flesh of the whole Creation. Myself is revealed in thee and in everything around thee, for the breath of life is in every created being, and I am Life eternal. Thou art part of Myself and immortal with and within Me."

The coloured rainbow then appeared in the Heavens, proclaiming reconciliation, peace, and harmony. The radiance of hope entered all weary hearts, and all beings left the presence of the Eternal One in resignation, joy and thankfulness.

"And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good."

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE KIDNAPPED PRINCE AND PRINCESS

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I

THE reader whose eye will be caught by the above sensational title will probably expect one of those fairy tales which so richly abound in the oral and written literatures of the world, invented and adorned by a fertile imagination for the gratification of lovers of fiction and romantic adventure.

And yet, our story, alas! is only too real and genuine, for it deals with facts which took place only a few years ago in Russia, and which are still far from their conclusion.

Indeed our heroes and heroines are living and moving amongst us, the chief victims as yet not fully conscious of the significance of their fate, others languishing in the agony of deferred hope, and yet another, the authoress of the whole tragedy, triumphing in what she devoutly believes to have been imposed upon her as a sacred duty and to have been done *ad majorem Dei gloriam.*

The tragedy of this specially Russian tragedy lies in the fact that its occurrence is not at all of an

accidental nature unpreventable by human vigilance and foresight, but on the contrary is an organic outcome of the fundamental conditions of Russian life, bound to happen and frequently happening now here, now there, just as blisters and eruptions are a natural corollary of a vitiated condition of the blood.

If we have chosen this particular case for our narrative, it is simply because of its being accompanied with peculiarly distressing features, seeing that an affectionate mother in her religious blindness and folly, became the principal agent in trampling upon all sacred maternal instincts, heaping lies and infamy upon another innocent woman and mother, and robbing parents of all that is dearest to them in life. But let us pass to the simple facts of the tragedy, and present them in a connected narrative from the fragmentary materials at our disposal.

All the events that led up to the chief tragedy are so deeply instructive in themselves, reflect so vividly Russian life, containing at the same time so much of general human interest, that we intend to trace them briefly before arriving at their culminating point, the kidnapping of the Prince boy and the Princess girl.

In 1875, young Prince D. A. Khilkoff, then only seventeen, passed his military examinations, and joined as officer the Hussar regiment of the Life Guards. He zealously discharged his duties, and

was respected by his superiors, but soon found that he had too much leisure at his disposal, and began to feel the aristocratic ennui, the disorderly life and pleasures of his colleagues not satisfying him. In 1877 the Russo-Turkish War broke out, and as his regiment was not sent to the field of action, Khilkoff himself sought and got an appointment in one of the Cossack regiments operating in the Caucasus. He was immediately entrusted with the command of an *Okhotnitchi*, or hunting company, whose mission it was to hunt Turks—not beasts.

Our hero, fresh from the military college, had some noble patriotic ideas of the calling of an officer. He believed that he himself, his superiors, and colleagues, all served the common cause of the Fatherland, and had even to sacrifice their lives for the glory of Russia. He believed that the common soldier was nobly taking his share in the patriotic battle, and was, therefore, entitled to recognition, consideration, and to just and humane treatment. Alas! a closer acquaintaince with the real life and doings of the commanders and officers of the various regiments soon opened his eyes as to his delusions. "I was struck with something which I could not have expected," he tells us. "Most of the commanders thought only of themselves, and would not hesitate to endanger the whole enterprise, or to expose to destruction thousands of their own people, if by this they could injure a rival commander, or receive

a personal distinction. I was disappointed, and began to feel for the deceived and speech-bound soldiers, who indeed were looked upon and treated as 'flesh for cannons.' I began then to do my best to try at least to spare the Cossacks under my own command."

Soon Khilkoff in one of the small "hunting" expeditions personally killed a Turk. His Memoirs do not make all the details of this incident quite clear, but to Khilkoff himself it afterwards appeared that he had committed simply a murder. This thought continued to haunt him, and in a truly Russian Orthodox fashion he intended first to do penance by fasting and taking the sacrament, and then to leave military service altogether, as the idea of having to kill more fellow-men in the future became abominable to him. When he made this confession to his comrade officers, it was taken simply as a joke, and the colonel of his regiment, Valueff, told him straight away that it was all nonsense, that he would not let him go, and that fasting would redeem his sin. He further advised him when in future encountering a Turk to stand still and let the latter shoot him; if killed, his own sin of murder would thus be redeemed.

Khilkoff reconciled himself to the situation, but his conscience once awakened could not be lulled altogether, and other incidents of the war continued to work upon his soul and heart and to disgust him

with the military profession. One of these happened immediately after the taking of Kars.

The Grand Duke's name day was on the 8th of November, and a military parade was arranged in his honour on that day outside Kars. The troops were standing on one side of a field strewn with stones, with their commanders facing them at some little distance.

When General Loris-Melikoff and the Grand Duke arrived, the ceremony began, the latter addressing his thanks to the victorious general, embracing him, and calling for the cheers of the troops. Amidst this shouting and jubilation there appeared suddenly on the spot between the troops and the commanders a four-wheeled rough cart packed with wounded soldiers. The vehicle was jolting over the stones, and the heartrending cries of the wounded filled the air. Blood was streaming from the cart, leaving a red trace behind it. The jubilation was so great that nobody had noticed the cart until it was before their very eyes. But now instead of letting the vehicle pass on slowly over the stones, the officers began to shout at the driver and to urge the horses to dash on quickly with their shrieking human load, as the sight could not add to the pleasure of his imperial highness and his excellency the general.

Prince Khilkoff was not on duty on that occasion, but was present as an onlooker of the grand parade.

The incident produced on him a strong impression, and amongst others went to prepare in him the new man.

II

After the termination of the Russo-Turkish War, Khilkoff decided not to return to St. Petersburg, but to continue his service in a Cossack regiment stationed in the Caucasus.

The next winter they were quartered in the Akhalkalakski district, where live many Doukhobortsi exiled from European Russia. Here he made for the first time the acquaintance of these Sectarians, to whom he has since rendered, and continues to render, so many devoted services.

The first Doukhobortsi village in which he happened to stay produced on him a striking impression, especially in comparison with the ordinary Russian villages. Everything bore the stamp of prosperity, the people themselves being of a tall, well-built and handsome type, without that look of depression and servility which is the characteristic feature of the Russian peasant. A little incident in the same village soon made him more deeply interested in the Doukhobortsi faith.

He was sitting and conversing with his host at the window, from which they happened to witness how an Uriadnik [1] struck a Cossack for having let

[1] A semi-police and semi-military officer.

his horse stray. Khilkoff apparently thought nothing of such an offence, but his host, the Doukhoboretz, suddenly asked him whether he believed in Holy Icons, and received an affirmative reply.

"And why do you believe in them?"

"Because they bear the image of God."

"And may one strike an Icon?"

"No."

"Now, tell me, how was man created?"

"In the image of God."

"That is so; but how then is it that one thinks it right to strike a man, the living image of God, as the Uriadnik has just done, but would on no account strike the wooden board with the painted image of God upon it?"

Khilkoff did not know what to reply, and therefore simply said that his companion lacked understanding!

The Doukhoboretz was silent for a moment, and then asked Khilkoff whether he had read the Gospel. The latter replied yes, whereupon the Doukhoboretz said—

"Yes, you have read the Gospel, but I can see you don't understand what you have read. Read it over again."

This incident had its effect upon Khilkoff, who now began to study earnestly the history and teaching of the Sectarians, also to read the Gospel in a new light. "I began to realize," he tells us, "that

the Doukhobortsi are nearer to the Gospel than we, the Orthodox ones."

Wandering with his regiment from place to place, Khilkoff soon had many opportunities of learning what Russian rule in the Caucasus really amounted to. He learned to read and speak Turkish, and was thus able to get all information at first hand. His account of the atrocities committed by the Russian authorities would be simply incredible were it not for the fact that the narrator's truthfulness is beyond suspicion. The list of these atrocities is too long to enumerate, but a couple of illustrations will suffice.

One district governor, Karagesoff, was simply in the habit of evicting the native Turks from their houses, breaking up the latter, and selling the wood to the Crown at the price of 80 roubles a sajen. Or he would order the Cossacks to summon to his house all the more well-to-do Turks of the district, then absenting himself for days. The Turks naturally asked what they were assembled for, but could get no reply. As they were not allowed to return to their homes, it would gradually dawn upon them to try to buy their freedom, offering as ransom five, ten, and even twenty roubles, each according to his means. The money duly received by some representative of the "Governor," the Cossack guard would disperse without further explanation, and so would their prisoners!

Another "Governor," Dratcheff by name, of the

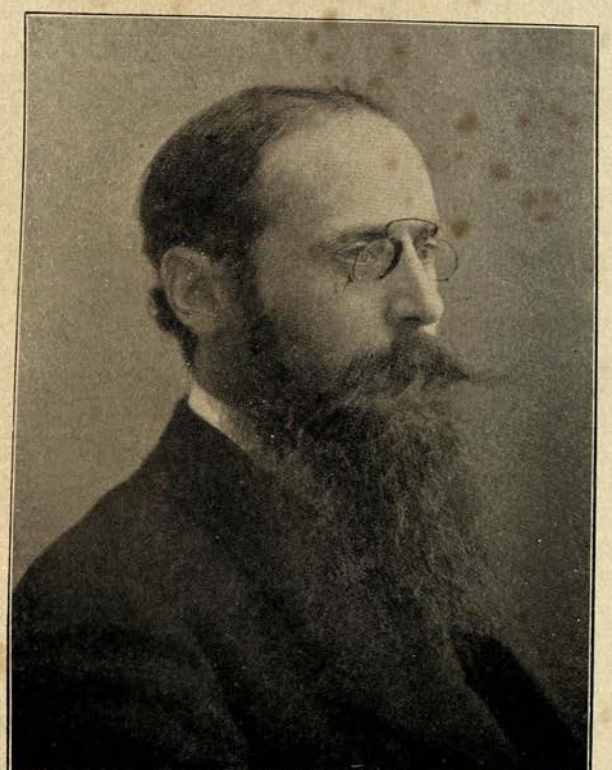
Kagismanski district, did not dare to send his envoys into the villages without an escort of Cossacks, who were allowed to plunder and even commit murders without any punishment.

On one occasion a company of Cossacks, under Khilkoff's command, were ordered out for that purpose. When they had left, he began to feel anxious lest some new atrocities, and even murders, were contemplated, and decided to start in haste and join his men at their point of destination. Arriving there, he asked them not to tell the civil official of his presence in the village, and went into one of the huts inquiring from the occupiers what the visit of the official was for. He was then told that the inhabitants had already paid their taxes for that year twice over, once to the Turkish, and another time to the Russian authorities, but that the latter wanted now to levy them a second time. Full of indignation, Khilkoff called on the official, and told him that he was going to return in order to interview the Governor, and explain the situation to him, ordering his Cossacks in the meantime to abstain from any violence. However, shortly after Khilkoff arrived at Kagisman, his Cossacks arrived there too. It transpired that after Khilkoff left the village, the official ordered the Cossacks to begin killing the villagers' cattle. The men refused to obey, the official swore at Khilkoff, and the Cossacks then mounted their horses and left the former alone

at the mercy of the infuriated inhabitants. The official then too, in dread of his life, hurried back to Kagisman.

Had any other person interfered in such a manner with the authorities whilst executing their duty in "keeping law and order" (*sic !*) he would no doubt have been officially tried and severely punished, but Khilkoff being a superior and titled officer, the "Governor" found it wiser to hush up the whole affair, knowing well enough that he himself had purposed simply to plunder the defenceless inhabitants. This episode, however, gave a most valuable lesson to Khilkoff, and had an influence upon his whole future life, for, as he himself tells it, "the occasion made me realize for the first time the chief object for which armies are maintained."

Naturally enough, protecting the natives against the high-handed plunders of the Russian authorities, Khilkoff became soon so popular amongst the inhabitants that he and his men were never attacked on the sly, whilst amongst other regiments both officers and men were frequently found murdered, if they ventured to go out without due precaution. The Russian rule weighed so heavily upon the native Turks that a number of them decided to emigrate, and invited Khilkoff to go with them, which at one time he seriously intended doing. On this occasion a poor compliment was paid to Christianity, the Turks firmly believing that Khilkoff,



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being so good and honest, could not possibly be a Christian, but a Mohammedan in disguise!

All these and other incidents had this result, that Khilkoff became finally disgusted with the military vocation, which he more and more found both senseless and sinful, and at last, in 1880, he resigned his post, and returned home to the estate of his mother, intending to occupy himself with agriculture and the improvement of the lot of the peasants.

III

During Khilkoff's military service many instructive episodes occurred, interesting both as glimpses into Russian military life and as illustrating the character of the subject of these sketches.

It appears that embezzlement of regimental funds was quite the order of the day, the bookkeeping being falsified with the knowledge of the commanding officers. On one occasion not less than 25,000 roubles disappeared, and could not be accounted for. No prosecution was instituted against the responsible officers simply because the Prince of Oldenburg was the nominal commander of the regiment, and the scandal would have been unpleasant to him. The General of the Corps then asked Khilkoff to take over the management of the commissariat, but the latter would only consent on

the condition that all expenses should be stated in the books accurately and not fictitiously as hitherto. The General declined such a stipulation, and appointed for that post another less scrupulous officer, with the result that at the end of three months several thousand roubles more disappeared. Evidently it was now feared that such high-handed rapacity had finally reached a culminating and dangerous point, for at last Khilkoff was sent for, and permission given to him to conduct the bookkeeping honestly. This change had most amazing results. At the end of the first year, not only were all regimental expenses duly covered, but even the missing sums were refunded, and yet a surplus remained of about 58,000 roubles.

If we take into consideration that such big sums were systematically embezzled in one regiment only, stationed in the remote Caucasus, one can easily imagine what the sum total of such rapacity must be in all the regiments of the greatest military power on earth, having no Prince Khilkoffs to record their dark deeds! Talk after that of the patriotism (*sic !*) of Russian officers, and of the ungrateful, ignorant inhabitant unable to appreciate the blessings of Empire—and the virtues of its gallant defenders!

Khilkoff, however, had to pay the penalty for such conduct. He got the reputation of being a "Socialist" striving to undermine the foundations of the State, and the local gendarme officer found it neces-

sary to establish a secret supervision of his movements. It meant in reality that he was suspected of breaking the Russian law, such as it is, and not preventing others from breaking it, truly an unpardonable crime in an officer appointed to protect law and order!

On another occasion Khilkoff was appointed President of the Regimental Court, and he had to try an Uriadnik for stealing a saddle from his comrade. From the circumstances of the case, Khilkoff was convinced that the accused had been badly treated by his commanding officer, and that the theft was committed with the object of expressing a protest and annoying the latter, who was morally responsible in the affair. On hearing all the evidence, Khilkoff came to the conclusion that the accused Nesmashni ought to have tried the judges, and not they him. "The real thing of the whole affair," said Khilkoff to himself, "lies in the fact that the Cossack guard which brought in the prisoner obeys our orders, and not his." This thought he communicated frankly to the other members of the court, asking them to explain the ethical grounds on which they intend to condemn the much-wronged prisoner. They could not explain anything. "Well, then," said the President, "if you know no reasons for condemning him, I, too, know none, and until I do know I cannot try him."

The accused was let free, but Khilkoff was no longer asked to preside at military trials.

To non-Russians such proceedings will seem no doubt extraordinary, but Russian law is a slim and flexible quantity, and it would be vain to gauge it according to the standard of other civilized countries.

On leaving the military service, Khilkoff, as has already been mentioned, returned home to his mother's estate in the Sumski district, Government of Poltava.

His mother made over to him 430 desiatinas[1] of land, leaving to herself the rest of the large estate, in the management of which he was not to interfere, as their ideas about land and peasants were quite different, his thoughts being chiefly of how much the latter ought to have—hers of how much could be taken out of them. The apple of contention was real, and in the literal sense of the word, for the apple orchard had been let for 600 roubles a year, but the Prince decided to manage it himself, and forthwith announced to the peasants that they need no longer steal the fruit, as they may come into the garden freely, eat apples to their hearts' content and even take away some. Not content with this, when all the apples were gathered in, Khilkoff gave away the half of them to the families of those peasants who had planted the orchard, and yet he received for the rest the sum of 200 roubles.

[1] One Desiatina = 2·70 acres.

Generally, his ideas about land and property became Socialistic. By what moral and divine right does the land belong to him and not to those who cultivate it? This was a cardinal question which tormented him incessantly, and a few incidents contributed to his solving the question, and not in his own favour. He liked to ride through a wood containing many young oak-trees, and once approaching it he noticed a peasant ploughing, whilst his two horses were let loose in the wood eating off the tops of the young trees. Khilkoff became very angry, and said to the peasant—

"Don't you know that the oaks will perish?"

The peasant turned his face towards him. "And," says Khilkoff, "such a face I have never seen before or after. I glanced at his emaciated, almost green face, with its sunken eyes, and felt quite stupefied and benumbed with emotion." The peasant only replied, "I have had nothing to eat myself for three days."

Khilkoff was horror-stricken, as the whole figure of the unfortunate man testified to the full truth of his statement.

On another occasion as he was approaching the wood he heard some noise, and looking round noticed a woman running away as if for her life, but falling to the ground at every few steps, then rising, and again running and falling. He called out loudly to her to stop, and not be afraid of him,

but the woman continued her flight over the marshy and difficult ground, until she succeeded in crossing a ditch, which Khilkoff, being on horseback, could not do. But he noticed that on reaching the other side the woman could run no longer, and fell on the ground evidently exhausted. He soon, however, ascertained the fact that the poor woman, who was expecting shortly to be confined, had come to the wood to gather some fuel of fallen branches, and on noticing the master became frightened lest she should be caught and punished for poaching.

All these incidents made Khilkoff ponder over the question what to do to live himself and let others live. He did not dare to approach his own wood any longer, to meet miserable faces again, or frighten out the soul of poor women in delicate condition. He could not stand reading in the eyes of the emaciated peasants their sorrowful, though silent, protests against him, the master, who does nothing, but enjoys everything. The land is not mine, he decided, sooner or later it must and will become the property of those who have laboured on it for generations. Why, then, not yield it to them at once?

After long hesitation and inner struggle he called together several representative peasants, and told them of his intention of selling the land to them practically at the price at which they were renting

it. Characteristic scenes followed, the peasants looking with suspicion upon the unheard-of offer. When they finally became convinced that no evil was meant, they began to disagree amongst themselves, each striving to make the best bargain for himself individually. At last everything was arranged, Khilkoff himself having planned out the allotments according to the number of members of each family and the land already in their possession. And now came a little episode, which Khilkoff himself tells evidently with unconscious simplicity of heart, but presenting none the less a touching and pathetic element.

When he had matured his plan of giving away the land to the peasants, he built for himself what he calls a "Khutor," an ordinary peasant cottage, where he settled, cultivating the land personally as an ordinary labourer. The cottage he built purposely in such a situation as not to interfere with the future proprietors of the land when they took actual possession of it. He allotted twenty desiatinas of land to the cottage, which he thought would quite suffice for his own humble requirements, all the more so as he wished to do all the work himself, and dispense, if possible, with hired labour. Now, as he had disposed of the whole land to the peasants, he said to them—

"You know that my cottage stands on the land which is now yours. But I am a man too, and need

a place on earth. Will you allow me to stay on, or must I go?"

The peasants wanted him to remain, so they allotted to the cottage a piece of seven desiatinas. They wished to give him a formal agreement of this transaction, but Khilkoff declined. "All the same," he said to himself, "if they drive me out afterwards, I should not go to the Court to claim my legal rights." Altogether Khilkoff gave away to the peasants about 1,161 acres of valuable arable and wood land.

The peasants soon built a whole village on the new land, consisting of sixty-three houses. Khilkoff now dismissed his farm hands, and began himself the life of a peasant, intending to open a village school, organize a library, etc. But he had not counted on the Russian authorities and priests, and soon troubles began, showing him that there is no room in Holy Orthodox Russia for peaceable labours of love and self-sacrifice on behalf of one's neighbours.

IV

Having distributed his land among the peasants, Khilkoff now did his best to assist them in many other ways.

"In the village," says he, "men able to read and write are scarce, and very much wanted. From the tax-collector up to the Governor of the Province,

all strive to 'flay' the mouzhik, though the law may stand in his favour. The nearest man to the peasant is the priest, without whom he dare neither be born nor married nor even die. With such a power in their hands, many priests exploit the peasant in a pitiless fashion. I have long since ceased to go to church, chiefly because I felt disgusted with the cynical attitude of the priests towards the faith they profess. Many a time the peasants and myself have been witnesses of the scuffles which took place at the very altar of the church in Pavlovka between the two local priests, who heartily hated one another. The peasants asked me to protect them against the greediness of their spiritual leaders. I wrote letters to the latter, and even to the bishop, which usually had effect, but made them hate me, as I touched their most sensitive spot—the purse. The result was that the priests began to denounce me to the authorities as a political agitator. Disguised gendarme officers commenced to pay me visits under various pretexts, and finally I was officially summoned, along with twenty peasants, before the examining magistrate to answer a charge of having seceded from the Greek Orthodox Church."

Khilkoff answered the charge in the affirmative, but as during the investigation no crimes came to light except the crying iniquities and abuses of the priests themselves, the authorities found it better to

hush up the whole affair and leave Khilkoff in peace —for a time at least.

Peace, however, could not be maintained for very long. Two peasants having learned from the Gospel that Christ forbids the taking of an oath, acted accordingly on the first occasion, and also brought their icons to the local priests, saying they had no more need of them. They were at once arrested, with the result that a number of other peasants followed their example, and brought their icons to the priests. The case being reported to the Bishop of Kharkoff, that worthy soon issued a general proclamation written in verse, with an order that it should be distributed in all the villages and read in all the schools of the diocese. As a "human document" characteristic of the spirit of the Holy Orthodox Church of Russia, we reproduce here a full translation of the proclamation, but must state that we can scarcely convey in English all the intense and contemptuous hatred pervading every line, every expression of the Russian original—

THE CURSED STUNDIST

Roar, ye Church thunders,
Arise, ye curses of the Holy Councils,
Strike with eternal anathema
The outcast Stundist's progeny.

The Stundist destroys the Dogmas,
The Stundist rejects tradition.
The Stundist scoffs at the ceremonies,
He is an apostate—the cursed Stundist.

The Lord has bestowed his honours
Upon our Holy Russian Church,
But this, our dear Mother,
Is insulted by the cursed Stundist.

Like stars in the firmament of Heaven
So shine in our native land
God's Holy Temples everywhere,
Shunned only by the cursed Stundist.

Prayers go up in the Temples,
Church Hymns are resounding
And Holy Sacraments performed,
All blamed by the cursed Stundist.

All our great saints,
The intercessors of the Russian Land,
And all our spiritual leaders
Are dishonoured by the cursed Stundist.

Whether we offer thanksgiving in the fields,
Or bless the sources of the water,
Or kiss the Cross of the Lord,
We are mocked by the cursed Stundist.

He is stern and gloomy, like a demon,
Shunning the sight of the faithful Orthodox,
He hides in dark haunts,
This enemy of God, the cursed Stundist.

But as soon as the simple-minded
Looks into the den of this crafty beast,
By blasphemy, insinuation or flattery,
Entraps him the cursed Stundist.

Those who know the gentle, loving, forgiving and self-sacrificing character of the Stundist will be filled with indignation on reading the above slanderous and wholly undeserved "poem" by a Christian bishop. To cruelly persecute innocent people always and everywhere, to forbid their religious worship, exile them in their thousands, and then to

accuse them of "shunning the sight of the faithful Orthodox," or of "hiding in dark haunts," is as just, logical, and sensible as calling the fox wicked and a coward because he tries to run away and hide himself from the yelping hounds. Neither is the Stundist "stern and gloomy like a demon"; on the contrary, all the Stundists it has been our privilege to meet with struck us by their remarkable cheerfulness and brightness, as if they had never known human cruelty and persecution.

When a copy of this shameful poem reached Khilkoff he wrote a commentary upon it, quoting, for that purpose, various texts from the Bible breathing love and forgiveness even to one's enemies. He sent a copy to the Bishop and distributed others among the peasants. The Bishop, in reply, sent two priests to the village to conduct religious debates and expose the "Cursed Stundists." The missionaries actually resorted to vodka as a means of exciting the passions of the Orthodox, the drink being gratuitously offered them both before and at the meetings, and the assembled being told that in other places the Stundists are torn to pieces by the faithful, whilst they, locally, are only asked to pass resolutions that the heretics should be expelled from the community.

The human sheep, however, proved to be more reasonable that their spiritual shepherds, and the "Cursed Stundists" were not only not torn to pieces,

but even left in peace, no doubt owing to Khilkoff's influence upon the peasants.

Along with these troubles of a religious nature, which the authorities did not mind much, there arose a series of disputes between the peasants and the landlords of a purely economic character, the former in their helplessness asking Khilkoff's advice and protection, which were readily given as far as possible. The story of these disputes is too long a one to be related here. Its principal feature is the lawlessness of both the landlords and Government authorities, who resorted to all possible tricks in order to encroach upon the peasants' property, forbidding all legal protests, and even sending executionary police and military forces to all the places where the peasants showed the slightest resistance.

In the village Gaponovo, Government of Kursk, nearly all the peasants were flogged by order of the Governor, Von Wahl, who was personally present during the execution of the order, counting the strokes and standing so near the victims that their blood bespattered his uniform. When the turn came of a peasant who had served formerly in the army and was the possessor of a military order, he pointed out that according to law he was exempt from corporal punishment. The Governor, in reply, by way of showing that in Russia an official is a law unto himself, ordered him several dozen strokes more for his protest!

All these proceedings were so arbitrary that even the Chief of the Kursk Gendarme regiment found them revolting, and consented to forward to St. Petersburg the peasants' complaint, which they composed according to Khilkoff's suggestion. The complaint was left without consideration and unanswered. Next the peasants sent a petition direct to the Czar stating their grievances and the unlawful punishment they were subjected to, but this, too, was not even acknowledged.

The authorities, who had hitherto more or less tolerated Khilkoff's religious apostasy, now began to look on him as a dangerous political agitator. The Governor of Kharkoff, having summoned him to a personal interview, told him that the Minister of the Interior had suggested that he should settle in town among educated people, where life is far more pleasant than in the village.

Khilkoff replied that he was quite contented with his village life and did not intend moving to town.

"In such case," said the Governor, "we shall expel you altogether; you disturb the mind of the peasants; they have been destined by the Creator to do hard work."

"And to die from starvation?" queried Khilkoff.

"Yes, and to die from starvation; but you put into their heads other ideas," replied the Governor, with the utmost composure. "You want to organize

a revolution, but you will not succeed for the next twenty years at least, I can guarantee."

"I do not wish to organize any revolutions, but simply to protect the peasants against the breakers of the law—the priests, the landowners, and the police. It is the authorities who systematically develop in the peasant those qualities and sentiments which will end in bloody outbreaks. You yourself realize this, if you can guarantee the maintenance of order for twenty years only."

Khilkoff further explained that he was not making any active propaganda among the peasants, that generally he did not urge his own ideas upon others, but that the peasants came to him on their own initiative asking for advice and guidance. "Let the authorities themselves act according to law, and there will be no need for the peasants to seek my intercession," concluded Khilkoff.

Shortly after this interview Khilkoff was officially informed that the Minister of the Interior resolved to exile him to the Transcaucasus for a period of five years. Evidently the authorities feared that the peasants would resist the Prince's expulsion and not allow him to be taken away from them, for the head of the police arrived in the village, accompanied by an unusual number of police officers and military. But no opposition whatever was offered. Khilkoff had called a meeting of the peasants beforehand, explaining to them why his case was

not being tried in an open court, and exhorting them to conduct themselves always in an orderly manner. When now he was led away as a prisoner through the village all the peasants appeared in front of their cottages respectfully taking leave of him, and many even weeping aloud.

Such was the reward of a Russian nobleman who wanted to be useful and helpful to his countrymen in their hours of greatest distress. But the real tragedy of his life was yet to come.

At the time of his expulsion Khilkoff was married and had two children, but his marriage had not been solemnized according to the rites of the Russian Church; his wife and children had, therefore, to bear all the terrible consequences of illegitimacy. It is the subsequent story of these children, and how they were torn away from their parents' bosom by the order of a cruel Czar, through the insinuations of a cruel, or simply misguided, grandmother, that forms the most painful element in the lives of the Khilkoffs, and with this we shall deal next.

V

D. A. Khilkoff married, in 1889, Cecily Vladimirovna Viner, who, sharing his religious views, consented not to solemnize their union according to the rites of the Established Church, which they both rejected. This, of course, meant that their marriage

was not recognized by law. When the same year a son was born to them, they did not baptize him, but gave him the name of Boris. In 1891, a girl was born, whom they called Olia, and left equally unbaptized. As illegitimate children, they were deprived of their father's name, title and property, and could not be admitted into any of the Government schools, suffering besides all other consequences of their position.

Princess Khilkoff, the mother of Prince Khilkoff, naturally did not approve of the form of her son's marriage, but became, nevertheless, affectionately attached to her grandchildren. Mother and son were already greatly divided in their religious and social views, and now the education and the whole position of the children formed new and constant stumbling blocks in their relations. Khilkoff and his wife let their children run about barefooted, and allowed them to associate with peasant children, nor did they send them to church. To the aristocratic and orthodox notions of the Princess all these and other things were abhorrent. She continually meddled in the domestic affairs of her son, especially in regard to the children, and to disputes and quarrels there was practically no end, the Princess striving to assert her authority over her grandchildren to the exclusion of their mother.

In February 1892 Prince Khilkoff was exiled to the Transcaucasus, and settled in a Doukhobor

village, Bashkitchet. Six months later, he was joined there by his wife and children. Life in this village during the winter months was simply unbearable on account of the muddy ground outside the poor cottages. The children especially were kept practically imprisoned indoors the whole winter and ailed all the time with various complaints. The next winter, therefore, Khilkoff sent his wife and children to the neighbouring German colony. Ekaterinenfeld, where the cottages were more substantially built and the roads kept in better condition; Khilkoff himself received permission to visit his family, and there was a prospect that for some time at least they would be left in peace.

Princess Khilkoff, however, decided to have her own way in the matter of her grandchildren. She petitioned Czar Alexander III for nothing less than the handing over of her grandchildren to her exclusive care, representing to him that they were neglected and even cruelly treated by their own parents. It was a time when Pobedonostzeff, the Procurator of the Holy Synod, was at the height of his power, and had commenced a war of extermination against Nonconformists, whose children, in numerous cases, were taken away from their parents and handed over to members of the Established Church, so as to be baptized and brought up forcibly in the Orthodox faith.

The Czar evidently considered it unnecessary

either to verify the charges made by Princess Khilkoff or to give an opportunity to the accused of stating their side of the case. The Prince was a heretic, he practically gave away his land to the peasants, and generally took up their side against the landlords and authorities; furthermore, his marriage, not solemnized in the Church, was no marriage at all in the eyes of the law: what other arguments were wanted for tearing away tender and innocent children from the bosom of their mother and father?

Alexander III, with the appearance of doing a noble, pious deed, granted the petition of Princess Khilkoff, the whole affair having been kept in the greatest secrecy till the very last moment, lest the victims should escape their captors.

One day in October 1893, when Khilkoff was visiting his family in Ekaterinenfeld, the local Chief of Police with a constable suddenly drove up in a covered carriage before their cottage, and without any preliminaries told the Prince that by order of the Czar he came to take away the children. Bewildered and dumfounded, Khilkoff could not reply at the moment—

"But in the eye of the Russian law I have no children. Whom then are you seeking?"

"All right, then," replied the official, "not your children, but those of Cecily Viner. Here is the order."

The document literally ran thus—

"By Order of the Lord Emperor, take away from Cecily Viner her children, Boris and Olia, and hand them over to the Princess Khilkoff."

What strikes one in this affair is, first, the absence of any legal procedure, any judicial trial. Nero wants it so, and his will is law. Numerous other children of Nonconformists are in exactly the same position, but Nero is not interested in them, and they remain with their parents. The law by itself is no law, does not exist until Nero wills it to exist. Secondly, one is struck with the absence of any logical reasoning in such an order. If, in the eyes of the law, Khilkoff does not exist as the father of his children, and there is only the responsible mother, Cecily Viner, then what claims can Princess Khilkoff make upon Boris and Olia as her grandchildren? Or, on the other hand, the Czar ordering the children to be handed over to the Prince's mother thereby recognizes that they are her son's children, and thus recognizing Khilkoff's fatherhood the children can no longer be taken away from him according to law.

However, it would be absurd seriously to seek logic or legality from Cæsarism founded on and existing by force and violence alone. It is easy to imagine the scene that followed the declaration of the above Imperial order. It appeared that the Princess Khilkoff had arrived herself with the

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PRINCE BORIS AND PRINCESS OLGA KHILKOFF,
THE KIDNAPPED CHILDREN

police, and stealthily made her way into the garden where the children were playing, not suspecting anything. Khilkoff first rushed to inform his wife, and then to the garden, where, seeing his mother talking to the children, he asked her what was the meaning of her unexpected visit.

Princess Khilkoff began to talk of the Czar and his order, but Khilkoff took the children to his wife indoors. The Princess and the police followed them there. Khilkoff and his wife began to make various inquiries from the police, who, however, could or would give only one reply: "We know nothing; it is his majesty's order." The children, not understanding the meaning of all the talk, but intuitively feeling their parents' distress, clung to them with all their might, they and their mother bursting into tears. The Princess in person, with the police, then began to literally tear away the children from their parents' embrace, the latter resisting as far as it was possible, but without avail.

The children were finally taken away for the night to the station of the local police, and the Khilkoffs were informed that the Princess would leave with them the next morning at ten o'clock. This was untrue, but told with the purpose of preventing the parents following the party, as the coach was ordered to be ready at six o'clock in the morning.

On learning this, the Khilkoffs, too, engaged a vehicle, intending to follow the children to Tiflis in

the hope that perhaps the Governor of the Province might be able to assist them. During this journey, many little incidents occurred showing how the people everywhere, and even the coach drivers, were indignant at this brutal kidnapping of children from their parents, and how tyranny is blindfold. not seeing the beam in its own eye, though perceiving the mote in others'.

On one occasion when the coach with the children was slowly moving uphill, their mother, who had a seat outside, went down and approached the open window of the carriage to see the children. "Olia, come to me," she said to the child, "mother will carry you a little in her arms." "No, no, Cecily Vladimirovna," retorted Princess Khilkoff, "I cannot permit you to do that." With these words she wanted to shut the window, but Cecily had already put her arm through it and held the little girl, who stretched herself towards her mother. The Princess, full of indignation, shouted: "You are using violence; I shall call to my aid the station master."

"You talk to me of my violence after what you have done to us all?" replied Cecily, taking the child from the carriage.

Some people standing by, and witnessing the incident, wonderingly inquired whose were the children, and on being told the story, even the driver of the coach exclaimed: "How is such a thing possible? Who dares to take away children from their

own mother? They would get it if they only touched mine."

Cecily carried the girl with her till the next station, then returned her, and took Boris out instead. The Princess again, with an expression of feeling herself wronged, protested and threatened Cecily that she would soon get rid of her altogether. In this she succeeded on their arrival in Rostoff, where the Princess managed to go off by the train, leaving Cecily behind and forsaken.

Time went on, but the unfortunate mother still hoped that a personal visit to St. Petersburg and a petition to the Czar might bring the children back to her, and at last she went to the capital.

General Richter, the Czar's Secretary, gave Cecily an interview, at which, as it was to be expected, nothing but the divergence of views between the State official and the heretical mother were plainly brought forth. In the whole conversation the General took upon himself the rôle of the friend and protector of the children against their mother, who, he asserted, did not care for them, and wished to wrong them. "You have not baptized them," he said, "you have deprived them of a name, position and wealth. They will not be able to enter any educational establishment. They will become anarchists like their father, who has preached Communism. You rebel against the laws of the State."

Cecily replied that, not themselves believing in baptism, they could not baptize their children, and that they did not ask the State for any rights and privileges; that Khilkoff did not preach Communism, but was exiled on account of his religious convictions.

"But he gave away his land to the peasants," replied the General.

"Yes, but has not any one the right of giving away his property to those for whom he has pity?"

"No, if you really loved your children you would not have deprived them of your wealth. You say you don't believe in baptism; all right, nobody can alter your inner convictions; but why not look on it as on a performance of an official ceremony, and thus secure a position for your children?"

"But baptism is a holy sacrament. . . ." The General here interrupted, saying he did not want to speak more about the religious question, and he turned to the subject of obedience to the laws of the State.

The interview came to an end, and the mother's petition was refused.

Being in St. Petersburg, Cecily wanted at least to see the children, but felt that the Princess would not allow her this. So in the evenings the miserable mother would stealthily, like a thief, walk to and fro in the Saperni Lane before the house of

the Princess, in the vain hope that she might, perhaps, get a peep at her darlings through the window.

"That big, four-storeyed house," writes Cecily, "seemed to me a real prison, behind whose walls I longed to penetrate. My imagination pictured to me my dear mites in various attitudes, and the consciousness of their nearness caused me both unspeakable pain and at the same time some satisfaction. Thus, having walked about for some time, I returned to my headquarters with a void and broken heart."

She, however, could not reconcile herself to the thought of leaving St. Petersburg without having seen the children, and in her despair she decided to ask that favour from General Richter. To her astonishment and pleasure, he consented to write a few words to the Princess to that effect, and Cecily at once took a drozhki and hurried to the forbidden house.

The Princess was not at home, and Cecily had to wait about an hour on the staircase of the upper storey where the children were confined. At last the Princess returned, and the servant, having handed her the General's letter, she came out to Cecily on the staircase and asked—

"What do you want to see the children for?"

"How can you ask me such a question?" retorted the bewildered mother.

"All the same, nothing will come from your seeing them."

"This may be so, but I want to see them nevertheless."

"All right, but I cannot allow you more than half-an-hour."

On the children being brought to her they looked at their mother and seemed scarcely to remember her. Olia said—

"Thou art somebody else's mother; we have no mother."

Boris added: "The valet told us that our mother was dead."

Cecily had to tell them that this was a lie, that their mother loves them, can never forget them, and that her only anxiety is lest they should forget her. Princess Khilkoff was all the time present at the interview, and would not let them be alone with their mother for a single moment. Cecily returned to her quarters feeling crushed, miserable and helpless, and found some consolation in the thought of being photographed, and leaving her likeness with the children, so that they should not forget their mother.

General Richter asked Cecily to let him know the impression produced on her by the children, evidently thinking that she would find them healthy and happy in their new surroundings, and here is what she wrote to him after the first visit—

"First of all they produced on me the impression

of little birds caught and confined in a golden and ornamented cage. They are kept in luxury and safety, they are being fed with sweets and confectionery, every one shows an interest in them, but they are deprived of the light of the sun, its warmth and its freedom; they have a sad look which tore my very heart. I expected to find them in flourishing health, as you told me, but instead of that they seemed to me like emaciated, faded plants which had lost their vital force. When they lived with us they looked perhaps rustic and rough, but they were strong, robust, and had a healthy colour. Now their appearance has become puffy and sickly, and their fresh colour has quite gone."

* * * * * *

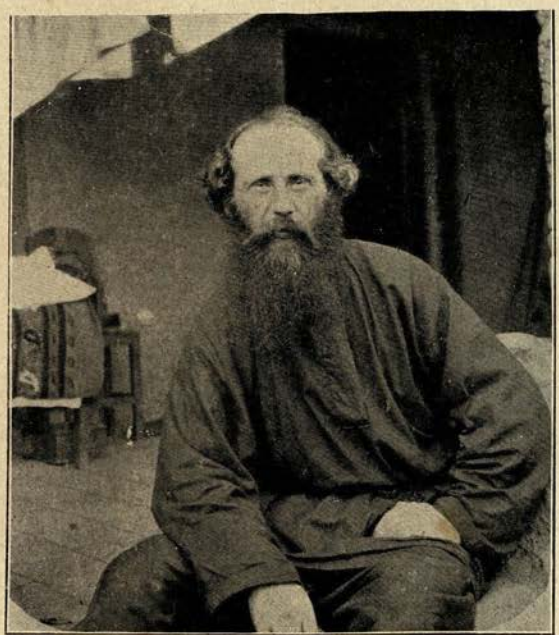
Since the above events took place, Prince Khilkoff has been allowed to leave Russia, and he has taken part in the settlement of the Doukhobortsi in Canada. His children are still with their grandmother, being brought up in Orthodoxy and loyalty.

Numerous children of Nonconformists have been taken away by the police and handed over to the Orthodox, practically into slavery, for the latter do not take them in for charity, but as future unpaid servants of the house. In the case of the Khilkoffs one is naturally struck with the fact that the person chiefly responsible for the tragedy is the children's own grandmother, an educated woman of exalted social position, proud of her Christian faith, and in

reality a kind-hearted woman, as has been told us by persons who know her intimately. Evidently she is unable to realize the cruelty of her conduct and the crime she has committed, not only against the parents, but also against the children themselves. By all divine and natural laws children belong to their parents, and it was only hypocrisy to claim that Cecily did not love her children and do her best for them.

Princess Khilkoff has acted not only criminally and heartlessly, but also foolishly. For if her own son, who was naturally brought up in strict Orthodoxy and loyalty, and inherited his title, position and wealth, broke away from injustice and falsehood, and became a friend of the oppressed and downtrodden, sacrificing for them his whole career and material interests, how much more likely is it that his children, too, will ultimately break the aritficial chains which are now put on them, and follow in the footsteps of their own father and mother?

Boris and Olia cannot be much longer kept in ignorance about the story of their life, and when they do learn the real facts, and begin to think for themselves, one is confident that they will fully share the affectionate admiration all nobler minds feel for their heroic and self-denying parents, who serve a higher love and truth beyond the comprehension of the Orthodox Princess Khilkoff and the



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PRINCE KHILKOFF IN EXILE

tyrant Czar, who gladly became her accomplice in the cruel deed.

A word about the rôle of Czar and our sketch is finished.

There is some extenuating element with regard to the Princess Khilkoff. She no doubt loves her grandchildren, and was actuated in her conduct by an anxiety for their future. She wishes to see them happy as she understands happiness, and one can only regret that she is blind to a higher light and cruel in her very way of discharging what she considers kindness and duty. But for the Czar, in this case as in other similar cases, it was only a question of policy in which the safety of the throne was involved. As General Richter plainly stated, the children if left with their parents would become Socialists and Communists like their father. Let us then hope that anyhow they will not grow up to be blind and obedient supporters of an iniquitous and tyrannic throne, as was the Czar's object in giving the order for their kidnapping.

CHAPTER EIGHT

"THE LADY CAVALIER"

NADEZHDA ANDREYEVNA DOUROVA

CHAPTER EIGHT

"THE LADY CAVALIER"

If the lady who gives her name to this sketch had lived in ancient days, her history would certainly have been regarded as a myth, or as a legend whose romantic heroine could never have existed save in the imagination; and yet it is the true story of a Russian woman, who, some forty-five years ago, was still living, and who is even now a cherished memory to many who knew and loved her. Her writings are still read with lively interest, but it is her life's history which chiefly arrests the attention and arouses our sympathy.

The name of this remarkable woman was Nadezhda Andreyevna Dourova, but she is far better known in Russia as the "Lady Cavalier," as the people loved to call her.

In her old age she wrote her autobiography, which —together with the reminiscences of her contemporaries, aided by the excellent books of the Russian writers, Mordovtzeff and Baidarow—has furnished the materials for this sketch.

We gather that Nadezhda's mother was a woman of a strong and energetic character, stern and wanting in tenderness in her treatment of her daughter;

also that, as a girl, she had run away from home and married a young officer of Hussars, whose suit her parents had forbidden; so that, burdened with an angry father's curse, the young pair had from the outset of their married life led a wandering existence with Dourova's regiment, which was almost incessantly on the march or in camp.

On September 17, 1790, when Nadezhda first saw the light, her parents were in Cherson. A little later the regiment was again on the march, and as the wailing of the little one was robbing her mother of much-needed sleep, it came to pass that once, her nervous system unhinged by exhaustion, in a sudden fit of impatience she threw the shrieking infant out of the carriage window. A cry of horror burst from the rough soldiers at the sight, and several sprang from their horses to snatch the child from imminent peril. By a miracle, as it would seem, Nadezhda had suffered no damage except a few scratches, but as she was being handed back to her mother, Dourov, with tears in his eyes, took possession of his little daughter, and, taking advantage of the power given him by law as a father, thenceforward he carried her with him as he rode, so that the saddle became our heroine's first cradle. Later on her father confided her to the care of his soldier servant, Astakhoff, of whom Nadezhda writes in her autobiography: "My first nurse was a Hussar, who carried me about for days in his arms, and used the

stable of the troop as my nursery. He gave me pistols for playthings, and clattered his sabre by way of a rattle for my amusement; I, the while, clapping my hands and laughing with delight as the sparks flew from the flashing steel. In the evening, Astakhoff would carry me to the band that its martial music might serve as my lullaby."

Little Nadezhda grew apace, and at every opportunity showed her strong predilection for the military life. Her father had meanwhile got his discharge, and had accepted the post of burgomaster at Viatka on the Kama. Here the growing girl was very strictly brought up by her mother, who, as she complains, made her sit quietly at home all day long and kept her continually busy with needlework and other uncongenial household tasks. This new régime of continual repression of all her impulses and instincts, and of close confinement after the open-air life she had led hitherto, must have been a trying change for the poor child, and thoroughly unwholesome for her, both physically and morally. Accordingly, while her body was thus imprisoned within the four walls of her home, her thoughts roamed free and far, and her fancy dwelt lovingly upon the natural freedom, which she had already enjoyed, and which it seemed her mother sought to rob her of; until gradually her longing to escape from the intolerable restraint imposed upon her crystallized into a firm determination to achieve at

all hazards, and by any means that offered, that freedom which was her heart's desire.

Nadezhda was only twelve years old when her father bought her an unbroken Circassian horse, and from that moment the young girl devoted all the time she could command or steal to the taming and training of this interesting animal. She fed him with bread, salt, sugar, and every other nice thing she could get hold of, until she had so completely conquered his affections that he followed her about like a pet lamb. Then, at night, when all the rest of the family were fast asleep, except a groom who was in her confidence, she would rise, dress noiselessly, and steal out of the house to ride for hours without a thought of fear, through field and forest, over hill and dale, on the back of Alkid, as she had called her beautiful and beloved horse. In this way she learned to ride as few women can ride, and the saddle, which had been her cradle, became her true home.

By the time she was sixteen, Nadezhda's unhappiness and discontent under her mother's severe system of training, and the dull monotony of the life of close confinement so alien to her nature, had developed into revolt. Confused, as she tells us, by the curious contrast between Madame Dourova's strong denunciations of the social slavery and political degradation of women, and her treatment of her daughter, the girl "had resolved to foreswear

a sex upon which it was evident that the curse of heaven rests." "Should it cost me my life," she writes in her diary, "I have made up my mind to leave my father's house disguised as a boy."

At this opportune moment some Cossack horse arrived at Viatka, whose officers were frequent guests at the house of the Dourovas. Mlle. Nadezhda, however, did not make her appearance before them, for she had decided to fly with this regiment, and feared that if they saw her as a girl they might afterwards recognize her in her boy's clothes.

On September 15, 1806, the Cossacks left the town, and our young heroine, having now arrived at the crisis of her destiny, was resolved to join them on the march two days later, that being her birthday.

The description of her flight from home is touching enough. Towards eleven o'clock in the evening she said "Good-night" to her mother as usual, but no doubt with more than usual tenderness, for her mother, as she kissed her, said, "God bless you, child!" and Nadezhda accepted these words as a good omen. Then her father came to her room to bid her "Good-night," according to his custom, and when he was gone she knelt down, deeply moved, and kissed the place where his feet had pressed the floor, the hot tears streaming from her eyes the while.

Her passionate fit of weeping over, she slipped

off her skirts and donned a boy's dress, which she had carefully prepared for this great occasion; threw a Circassian cloak, such as the Cossacks wear for riding, which her father had given her, over her shoulders, tied a black silk scarf round her waist, and placed a high Cossack cap, adorned with a red tuft, on her head. Her disguise was now complete, and looking in her glass she gained confidence from the reflection she saw therein, that her identity as Nadezhda Dourova was lost, and that her sex would never be suspected.

On a hill just outside the town the groom already mentioned was awaiting her with Alkid, who was now her very own, having been given to her by her father on her last birthday. Half asleep, and imagining that his young lady was only going for her midnight gallop as usual, the man noticed nothing out of the common in her attire, and hurried home at her bidding; and so at last Nadezhda was free!

"It was a cold, clear night, the moon was at the full, and the way lay through a thick pine forest. Encompassed by the woodland stillness and the darkness of the autumnal night, for the moon had hidden her face behind the clouds," so she writes, "I rode on rapidly, absorbed in thought. 'Now I am free,' I thought, 'and I belong to myself. I have taken possession of that which is the right of all, freedom, the noblest and most precious gift of

Heaven, which shall henceforth be mine until I die.'"

At daybreak she reached the camp of the Cossacks, and introduced herself to their captain as a nobleman's son, who had run away from home because his father refused to allow him to become a soldier.

The Cossacks were delighted with the sixteen-year-old boy, as they thought her, from the first. He looked so young and tender, and was yet so brave and full of spirit, that they straightway took him under their protection. Now began, indeed, a new life for the young girl. "The first day," as she herself relates, "the melancholy cadence of the Cossacks' favourite marching song ('Dear heart! my faithful steed') attuned my thoughts to sadness. My heart yearned for the parents who loved me at home; the shadow of the unknown future lay upon my spirit, and I was forced to bow my head low upon my horse's mane to hide the fast falling tears from my rough comrades. I soon conquered my weakness and took a silent vow steadfastly to follow the path I had chosen of my own free will."

This whole winter through Nadezhda marched and camped with her regiment, took part in all their daily work and drill, and practised all the details of military service with untiring zeal and diligence, leading, without a murmur, the hard life of a common Russian soldier. She commemorated this

period of her life in her diary by the following words, addressed to her own sex—

"Freedom, that priceless gift of Heaven, has become mine for ever! I breathe the breath of it, and rejoice in it with my whole soul. My whole existence is purified and quickened by its spirit. You of my own sex can alone enter into my rapture and measure the true value of my prize; you, whose every act is prescribed; you, who may not take one step in the open air, even with a friend, without your mother's permission; you, who from the cradle to the grave live in ceaseless dependence—upon God knows whom! You, I repeat, alone can enter into the pure joy I felt when, seeing myself set in a wide landscape of fields, forest, mountain, valley, and stream, I suddenly realized that over all I might wander alone, free and unforbidden, following my fancy and without fear of being called to account for my goings and doings. I danced for very joy at the thought that in all my life I should never again be insulted by the words which had been so often dinned into my ears: 'You must stay quietly at home, Nadezhda; it is not proper for girls to go out alone.' Never again should I sit weeping at the window, wearily making lace at my mother's bidding."

Yet there were times when the highly prized freedom to live a soldier's hard life weighed on Nadezhda almost more heavily than she could bear. It often chanced that the Cossacks could find no

food, and the young recruit had to go hungry with the rest. She describes such a time in her journal—

"We have been here (a Lithuanian village) for more than three weeks. I am equipped with the uniform of my regiment, with a sabre and a spear; the latter is so heavy that it seems to me like a weaver's beam. I wear worsted epaulettes, a fur cap, and a leather belt with a pouch full of cartridges. It all looks very smart and clean, but alas, how heavy it is! I hope to get used to it by degrees, and to the cruel boots also, which feel as if they were made of iron, so hard and so heavy are they, and ever since I have worn them I have been almost crippled by their weight, and that of the great jingling spurs which adorn them. Every day besides, even though dead tired and sick with hunger, I have to dig potatoes for my dinner in the garden of the rough hostess upon whom I am quartered. She cooks them well, but serves them up so roughly that she generally upsets some of them on to the dirty floor. What a clumsy woman she is! However, it relieves me to think that she loses nothing by feeding me, since, if I did not dig for them, they would probably be left to rot in the earth."

Whatever happened, Nadezhda never lost courage, and she rejoiced heartily when at last the regiment marched to join the war Russia was then waging abroad against Napoleon.

The impressions of her first battle at Gustadt we

find recorded in her diary under the date May 22, 1807, in the following stirring and enthusiastic words—

"For the first time I have seen and taken part in a battle, and now I know how false were the ideas I had formed of war, and of all that the words horror, fear, and courage may mean. Our regiment advanced several times to the attack, not *en masse*, but each squadron by itself. I rode forward with each detachment, not in foolhardiness, but because in my youthful ardour I considered it my duty. The novelty of the scene riveted my attention, and the excitement of it excluded all thought of fear. What a hideous, mighty roar of thundering cannon, what a howling and a hissing of whistling bullets! What a thrilling and noble spectacle the cavalry charge, and the myriad lightning flashes from the hedge of gallant infantry! Then the glorious roll of the drums, and the massive onward sweep with which our horse bore so calmly and resistlessly down upon the foe. These glorious scenes thrilled my breast with emotions I had never felt before."

In the course of this battle Nadezhda observed that some of the enemy's dragoons had wounded a Russian officer whom, already swaying in his saddle, they were about to finish. On the spur of the moment the young amazon dashed up on horseback to the rescue with levelled spear, and by the dauntless boldness of her attack she put the French

dragoons to flight, then, exerting all her strength, she helped the wounded and dismounted man on to her own horse, and, reckless of the fierce storm of bullets raging round them, brought him safely back to the rear. This officer, named Panin, belonged to one of the first families in Russia.

The fatigues of war gradually exhausted Nadezhda's reserve of physical strength, but never her courage or her fortitude. Her strong will to endure bore her up through hunger, cold, and sleeplessness, and enabled her to pass scatheless through many dangers to her health.

"But there are limits which human nature cannot pass," she says, "and at length I was overcome by sleep and weariness, and the misery of chronic damp and cold. For two days I had neither eaten nor drunk; I had been detained on duty for many weary hours in a dank, unhealthy marsh—always in the saddle, always on the *qui vive*—and with nothing but my damp uniform to protect me from the cold wind and rain. I was worn out, and feeling that my strength was ebbing with each hour, I thought I would utilize every precious halt by dismounting and sleeping on the ground beside my horse. This I did again and again, falling asleep the instant I touched mother earth, to be roused shortly by the brutal shouts of the Cossacks, when, with eyes still blind with sleep, I scrambled once more to the saddle and shouldered once again the heavy burden

of my spear. Repeating this *da capo* at every break, however short, in the weary march, my comrades at last lost patience with me, and threatened to leave me to my fate on the field if I did it again; and the quartermaster grumbled, with some ugly oaths, at the folly of allowing 'such feeble young cubs to creep into the service.' So, thereafter, I had to sleep as best I could on horseback, nodding my head till it touched dear Alkid's mane, and waking with a start with the feeling that I was falling, and so bewildered that I did not know where I was. My eyes were wide open, but everything round me was changing shape and wavering, as in a dream. The Cossacks I took for trees, and the trees for Cossacks. My head was burning with fever while I trembled with cold, for my clothes were continually soaking wet."

Nadezhda took part in the fatal and bloody battle of Friedland, where more than half her regiment was left dead on the field; and again she behaved with an uncommon courage, and saved the life of a comrade at the risk of her own. After this the army returned to Russia, and our heroine with it; but by this time a rumour had got abroad that she was not what she seemed. The rumour having reached the ears of the Emperor Alexander himself, he desired to have a personal interview with her, and accordingly the young Cossack was summoned to the headquarters of General Field-Marshal von Buxhôweden,

then at Vitebsk. The General received her kindly, and tried to reassure the trembling girl. "I have heard much of your bravery," he said, "and your commanding officers have recommended you highly to me; therefore do not be alarmed when I tell you that I am to send you to the Emperor. His Majesty desires to see you; but you have no cause to fear. Our Emperor is gracious and generous, as you will learn for yourself." Nadezhda was terrified nevertheless, lest she should be commanded to bid an eternal farewell to her regiment and to the service she loved so fervently. With comforting words the Field-Marshal gave her into the charge of Sass, the Emperor's aide-de-camp, with whom she now went to St. Petersburg.

The Emperor Alexander received the young girl, now nineteen, and still dressed in her Cossack uniform, most graciously. "He took me by the hand," she writes, "and led me to the table, against which he leaned, speaking so kindly and so gently to me that hope revived in my breast, and I forgot to be afraid. 'I have heard,' then said the Emperor, 'that you are *no man, but a girl.* Is that true?' *Now* I trembled, and my hand shook in his. I could not speak at first; but, looking straight at him, I whispered at last, 'Yes, your Majesty, it is true. Though I am a soldier I am not a man.' And the Emperor blushed as I said it, so that suddenly I felt I was blushing too."

The Emperor questioned Nadezhda further as to the circumstances which had led her to adopt so unusual a career, and she told him everything without reserve. He praised her pluck, and said that she had set an almost unprecedented example of heroism to the women of his empire. Her commanding officers had praised her highly, he added, and had expressed themselves as well satisfied with her conduct both in the field and in camp; while she had gained an unequalled reputation for courage. "I am glad to believe all this," continued the Emperor, "and it is my intention to send you home to your father loaded with honours, whilst——" Nadezhda was so agitated by this terrible threat that she did not hesitate to commit the crime of *lèse-majesté* by interrupting the Emperor in the middle of his sentence. Overcome with horror, she threw herself at his feet, exclaiming, with tears in her voice if not in her eyes: "Do not send me home, your Majesty! I should die—I should surely die! Do not force me to regret that all through the campaign every bullet missed me. Do not, I entreat your Majesty—do not rob me of the life that of my own free will I have devoted to your service!"

The Emperor, touched by her passionate devotion to her profession, then said: "If you think, indeed, that the right to wear my uniform and to bear arms in my wars is a sufficient reward, this right shall be yours; and henceforth you will be called by my

name—Alexander. I do not doubt that you will show yourself worthy of this honour. Never forget that my name must be kept without a stain, for I should not forgive you if ever you sullied it by an unworthy act."

All this is reported in Nadezhda's diary.

After the audience the Emperor appointed his young namesake to be an officer in the Mariupolsky Regiment of Uhlans. Some time later the Emperor again sent for Nadezhda, and asked her to tell him the story of the rescue of Panin, which she did with becoming modesty. "He is of an illustrious family," said the Emperor, "and this single instance, alone, of your bravery reflects the greatest honour upon your whole campaign, for it sprang from one of the worthiest of all motives—compassion. Although, then, virtue is its own reward, justice demands that you should also receive what, by the laws of war, is your due—the Order of St. George"; and with these words the Emperor gracefully decorated Nadezhda with his own hands with the cross of that Order. The newly-made "Lady Cavalier" now rejoined her regiment, with which she served continuously for two years and a half, and then took leave to pay a visit to her father, her mother having died since she left home. Her father's joy and pride may be better imagined than described, when in the dashing young Uhlan officer he recognized his darling child.

But Nadezhda could not stay long in her quiet and comfortable home. The needle and the spindle were not her weapons. The clattering of hoofs and the rattle of the drum drew her back to the life she had chosen, and that the more irresistibly as the terrible year 1812 was now approaching, when every creature who was capable of bearing arms was called upon to fight; and the tender child of 1806 had developed in the interval into a strong and dauntless soldier—and more, for Nadezhda was now the gallant, skilled, and trustworthy commander of a squadron of horse.

The grim and bearded Uhlan veterans under her command had not the faintest suspicion that the captain they obeyed with such prompt decision, that the brave soldier who led them into battle with such remarkable gallantry, was a *woman*. God forbid! So well did she keep her secret, that it often chanced that her own story was told in her presence at the officers' mess or over the camp-fire, with many fanciful additions, of course; but no one ever suspected that the heroine of these adventures was among the audience. This fact speaks volumes for the character and conduct of the Lady Cavalier, and proves that she was quite unusually gifted with will and self-control.

From her diary of this campaign, which fills three thick volumes, we learn that Mlle. Nadezhda Dourova took part in almost all its battles, exposing

herself fearlessly wherever the fight was thickest and the danger greatest. Some passages, taken almost at random, will give an idea of the hardships which she endured at this period. On one occasion, being thoroughly exhausted by a march which had lasted three days and nights, during which time there had been no opportunity for rest or sleep, she writes—

"I could hold out no longer, but slipped into the town in advance of my regiment, and entered the first house I came to, intending to secure half-an-hour's sleep, which I felt I must have or perish. Dismissing my orderly with injunctions to wake me as soon as the regiment arrived, I lay down at once, while the woman of the house was preparing a meal for us, and fell into a deep sleep. When I awoke it was night, and all was silent round me. I rose and called loudly for my man. 'Has the regiment not arrived yet?' I asked, as soon as he appeared, and was told that it was encamped outside the town. 'Why did you not wake me as I ordered you?' 'It was impossible; you slept like the dead,' he replied. 'We tried to rouse you by speaking and touching you gently at first, and then we shouted in your ear; pushed and shook you; we even set you on your feet, passed lighted candles before your eyes, and threw cold water in your face; but all in vain! You never stirred, nor once opened your eyes, and our good hostess, who was looking on, wept as we laid

you down again. "Poor boy!" she said, "he looks as if he were dead;" and she bent over you to be sure that you still breathed, saying that it was cruel to ask such young things as you to fight.'" In another place she writes: "I don't know what to do. I am afraid I am quite done for at last! and it will not be put down to the terrible toils, and exertions, and sufferings of the campaign, but to my woman's weakness. I am devoured with thirst, and there is no water to be had but out of the roadside ditches. Once I dismounted to drink there; and, after having with the greatest difficulty succeeded in scraping up a few drops of the green and fetid fluid, I rode five versts with my treasure before I could make up my mind either to drink it or throw it away. But to what horrors will dire necessity compel us! I swallowed the diabolical liquid at last. . . ."

At Smolensk our heroine took part in the battle against Napoleon, and had many hairbreadth escapes. Once when her squadron had been ordered to retreat in order to draw the enemy towards the Russian lines, trusting to the unusual speed of her horse, she was lagging behind to cover the hindmost of her men, when she suddenly realized that four of the French dragoons were but an arm's length behind her and able to reach her with their sabres. But instead of putting spurs to Alkid, as she had intended to do in such an emergency, the madness of battle seized her, and, facing them boldly, she

attacked them with such fierceness that they turned and fled.

After the terrible battle of Borodino she writes, under date September 8—

"I have been almost deafened by the ceaseless roar of artillery on both sides; and as to the bullets, which whistled and shrieked, they fell about us like hail, even the wounded scarcely heeding them."

In this engagement she was wounded in the foot by a spent cannon-ball, but fought on till she fainted from loss of blood, and was then carried to the hospital in the rear. The wound was not serious, and she was able to lead her troop in pursuit of the sad remnants of Napoleon's *grand armée* shortly afterwards. They were before Hamburg when the news of the fall of Paris arrived, and then for a short space of time there was peace.

Nadezhda took advantage of this opportunity to pay a visit to Holstein and Denmark, and her description of this journey is particularly interesting, as showing the germ of the literary talent which she afterwards developed more fully; and also as betraying, however unconsciously, frequent flashes of that true womanly instinct that all the horrors and heroisms of war had failed to destroy in her.

"Ah! beautiful and hospitable land of Holstein!" she cries; "I can never forget your blooming gardens, your dazzling halls, or the honest

kindliness of your people. What happy days I spent among your verdant meadows—the happiest in my life." She was loth to say "good-bye" to these pleasant places, and so, it seems, was her colonel; for she says: "I went to tell the colonel that the regiment was drawn up in marching trim awaiting his orders, and found him standing before a looking-glass arranging his hair, and evidently deep in thought. He seemed at first to take no notice of my announcement, but presently he said: 'Let the men fall out; I shall not be ready to march for half-an-hour,' and he sighed. I permitted myself to ask why he sighed—could it be that my colonel was sorry to turn his steps homeward? Instead of answering he sighed again. Then I observed that the youngest of the colonel's hostesses, the fair Baroness ——, a charming girl of twenty, was in tears; and I knew why he was so loth to leave. . . . Yes! when lovers part, even to return home seems exile."

Nadezhda Dourova shows considerable psychological insight and power of subjective observation, when she confesses that she only felt like a woman when, in her assumed character of gentleman, she found herself obliged to yield precedence to ladies, and to obey their wishes and commands. "This duty," she says, "belonging to the dress and position I have adopted, is not pleasing to me. When, in the course of a dance, my partner whispers soft nothings

to me, or looks at me with languishing eyes, speaking of love and love's longing, I always blame her in my heart, feeling only disgust at those signs which might be so sweet and precious to the heart of a *man*. To *me* it always seems as if the women knew my secret and were mocking me. Nothing, too, vexes me more than when, tired with waltzing, I have just sunk into a seat, and am then unceremoniously called upon to yield it to a lady. On such an occasion I rise with rage in my heart, utterly oblivious of my sword and spurs, and longing to claim my natural privileges as a lady. But, of course, I have to obey, with however bad a grace." In fact, many a woman seems to have felt her heart warm to the young and handsome officer, beardless as he was; and some even betrayed their passion, hoping for a return in kind. Then a great rush of pity swept through Nadezhda's heart for the blind, foolish creatures who were so easily deceived by a uniform!

Nadezhda Dourova spent almost nine years thus soldiering. She was always respected and loved by her comrades—by the men under her command, and by those in authority over her; and during the whole of that time she had been able to preserve the secret of her sex as completely as she preserved her innocence and her virtue in the midst of a society of rough men. She could not but hear the coarse jokes of the Cossacks around her in her early youth, and

the free talk of her Uhlan friends of a later period; and she must have seen much of the licence of their lives. All this must have made a deep impression on the pure mind of the young girl; yet it left the modesty of her woman's nature intact.

On the conclusion of peace, having heard that her father's health was failing, Nadezhda decided that it was her duty to return home to nurse and bear him company; but her diary shows how much it cost her to renounce the life of strenuous action that she had conquered for herself, and that she held so dear. "It seems almost a crime to desert the service at my age," she writes. She was then twenty-five. "What is there for me to do at home?" she continues. "Must I really resign myself to the monotonous drudgery of housekeeping? My loss, however, will be my father's gain, and his age and infirmity demand the sacrifice. Well, then, I must say farewell to it all—to my sword and my brave old charger;—farewell to drill, parade, races, and to the bloody battle-field; farewell to my gallant soldier friends and the merry life I love! Farewell *for ever;* for it must be for me as if it had never been; and only the silent memory of it all may accompany me to the lonely shores of the Kama. Even that will lend new life to the dead house where my childhood passed so sadly, and where I matured the plans for the strange career I have ever since followed and loved. Happiness, fame, inspiring

dangers—smoke and glitter—light, air, action—all that make the life I love—farewell!"

Henceforth for many years, Nadezhda Dourova lived in retirement with her father; yet this after-life of hers is no less rich in experience and in interesting episodes than the preceding decade, even if it lacks the dramatic character of that period.

In 1830 Mlle. Dourova went to St. Petersburg on private business. At the same time she was received by the Czar and Czarina, wearing the uniform of the regiment she left, and was treated and addressed as an ex-military officer and Cavalier of the Order of St. George, nobody daring to make allusions to her sex. Once the Czarina walked with her in the rooms of the castle, and approached a new picture, which the Emperor had just bought at the Royal Academy of Arts. The picture represented the brave deed of a young sub-officer saving in the thick of battle Panin, an officer of a Finland Dragoon Regiment. "Is this episode of the battle of Gutstadt familiar to you, Mr. Alexandroff?" asked the Empress, gazing at her companion. The officer grew pale, tears appeared in his (her) eyes, and moved by emotion he fell at the feet of the Empress.

"Rise up! Rise up! Nadezhda Andreyevna," said the monarch, calling the officer by the real name. "You, you must not bow, but some must bow to you for your brave deed. This picture will

find a more suitable place in your own home, and the Emperor and I wish that you should take it home as a present in commemoration of your visit."

The incident soon spread in Petersburg society, where before Alexandroff had been little known, and the latter was overwhelmed with invitations. She made the acquaintance of several literary leaders, who influenced greatly her future career.

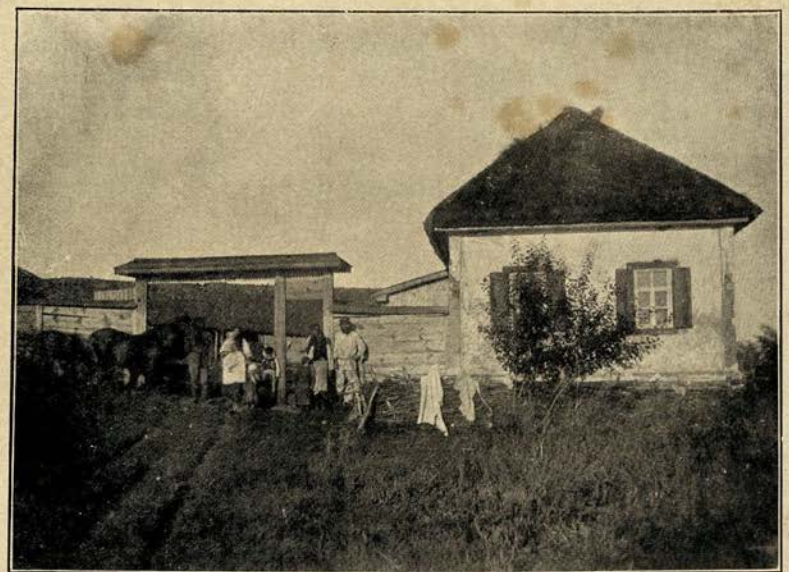
Richly gifted by nature, she now began to cultivate her mind, and henceforth dedicated her unusual powers to literature. She began her new career in 1836 by the publication of her reminiscences under the title of *The Lady Cavalier;* and this work is of great interest and importance, not only as "a human document" serving to elucidate the inner life of this Russian Joan of Arc, but also as furnishing authentic details concerning many persons and events of the memorable times of the Napoleonic Wars. The author had herself lived through it all, and had fought in the forefront of the Russian army under the famous General Kutusov, whom, in her capacity as orderly officer, she had every chance of knowing intimately, and who had shown a fatherly interest in and liking for her. In 1839 a supplement to this diary appeared, and she wrote, besides, many stories and novels for the best Russian periodicals of her time, such as the *Library*, published by Sennovsky, and *Annals of the Fatherland*, for the years 1837–39. "The Lady Cavalier" had now

become one of the distinguished authors of the period, the best known of her works being *Gudishky* ("The Peasant's Lute"), *Pavilion*, *Yartshuk*, *Count Mavriky*, and *A Few Words out of Life's Dictionary*.

In 1887 the Russian literary world commemorated with much pomp the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Alexander Pushkin, and on this occasion the Lady Cavalier was remembered too with the poet, she having been a great friend of his. At several theatres a play was given, the leading figure being our heroine. A Mr. Blinoff made special research in the archives of the towns Sarapul and Elabug, where Mlle. Dourova sent the latter portion of her life. He threw some new light on many circumstances accompanying her flight from home, which do not change essentially the account we have given. People who knew her in old age characterized her as having preserved her exalted and romantic nature, and being very charitable and kind-hearted.

The heroine of iron will, who gloried in battle, possessed none the less in private life much sensitiveness. When her little pet dog died she was not to be consoled. She made a funeral, dressed the animal for burial, and put a hedge around its grave, paying for the plot a rouble per month. It is rather shocking—and, indeed, it seems almost incredible—that this celebrated and most remarkable woman

spent her last years in poverty. She died the 23rd March 1886 in Elabug. Her funeral was attended with due military honours, a band of music of the local battalion heading the procession, and an officer carrying before it the military emblems of the deceased amazon and author.



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THE COTTAGE PRINCE KHILKOFF AND HIS FAMILY OCCUPIED AFTER HE HAD GIVEN AWAY HIS LAND TO THE PEASANTS

(*See p.* 225)

CHAPTER NINE

SEMITE AND SLAV

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SEMITE AND SLAV

FLEEING from the persecutions of their tyrannical Government, a Russian Jew and a Russian Slav sought and found refuge in the classical land of Freedom—England. They both reached the latter country without any means of subsistence. The Jew, however, by his energy and perseverance, soon made a position for himself, whilst the more sluggish Slav made little progress, and had a hard time of it. The Semite was quite ready to help his compatriot in any way possible, but the jealous and unyielding temperament of the Slav kept them apart; nay, the latter even sought wherever he could to slander and injure his Semite fellow-countryman. At length they met at the house of a mutual English friend, and it was not long before the Slav, losing all control of himself, called out to his compatriot—

"But you are no Russian; you are *only* a Jew."

All present showed distinct signs of indignation at this utterly unprovoked attack, and felt anxious lest some violent scene should follow. But the Jew, turning to his offender, calmly said—

"And, pray, what are you?"

"I am a pure Russian Slav!"

"Oh! only that," again calmly replied the Jew. "You have nothing to say against me personally, but you hate me on account of the race to which I belong. Do you realize the true difference between the Jewish and the pure Russian race? Listen, and learn, if you have ears to hear."

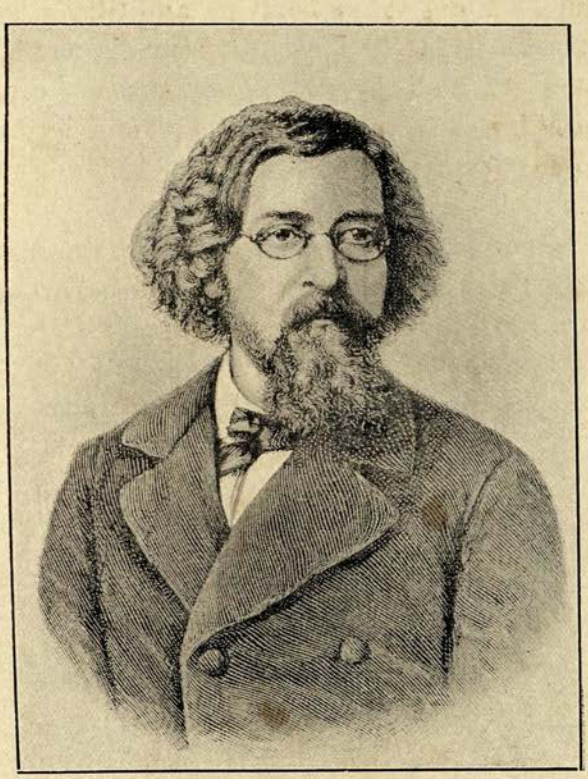
Then the Jew rose from his seat, and gazing at his foe with a prophetic fire in his eyes, as if he were facing all the anti-Semites of the world, said—

"More than four thousand years ago the ancestors of my race, a handful in number, rose like one man against the millions of their Egyptian oppressors, and triumphantly marched out of the house of bondage, to freely worship the God that suffers no bondage. To-day millions of pure Russian Slavs lie in dust trodden under the feet of a modern Pharaoh, not yet having risen even to a conception of their terrible degradation and want of liberty. Were it not for the low and stagnant masses of your pure Slavs, whom it is impossible to move or drag along, we Jews would in all probability have long since shattered the throne of the modern Pharaoh, as we did with the ancient one. When the glory of my race was at its highest, when a Moses laid the foundation of all Christian civilizations by his Ten Commandments, and King David attuned his harp to melodious hymns never surpassed by any other mortal; when Isaiah hurled at

a sinful world divine shafts of reproach and warning, forestalled the Gospel of Jesus, and made lion and lamb lie together, as a symbol of the coming millennium of eternal Peace and Brotherhood; when all the world rang with the fame of my race, and heathen queens from afar made their pilgrimages to Jerusalem laden with presents and offerings—where were then the ancestors of your pure Russian race? They roamed naked in wood and forest, eating one another, with scarcely any notion of angel or devil, or any moral law. In vain you will search in the records of history for the very name 'Russia' or 'Slav' at the time when Israel's every move, change and step were chronicled in indelible golden letters, reverently read to this very day by Gentile nations. Athens and Rome darkened before the light that came from Zion, and Herods and Cæsars were swept away by the breath of the crucified Jew of Nazareth. About fifteen centuries after the brilliant sun of Judea finally sank over the towers of David, a dim moon for the first time rose over the Cremlin of Moscow, but only to illumine the bloody deeds of an Ivan the Terrible and a Maliuta Skuratoff. Angel-like when obedient to the gospel of the Great Jew, devil-like when defying it—that is what the whole Christian world has been, is, and ever shall be. And yet you defy me because I am of the Jewish race, and pride yourself on being a Slav! Friend, is there any justice or common sense in

your hatred of my race? Personally, too, I have done you no harm whatever, and would only rejoice in your welfare, there being sufficient room in the world for you and me. Besides, our common foe destroys in our native land Jew and Slav alike, and both you and I had to flee from his wrath. So, instead of foolishly quarrelling between ourselves and filling our common enemy with joy, let us work together for the sacred cause of Russian Freedom, for in unity there is strength."

Hearty English applause followed the harangue of the Jew, but the Slav shook his head negatively. For it has been decreed by the Creator that all evils shall have their remedies, every foe be made capable of reconciliation, except him who is possessed by the devil of jealousy.



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NICHOLAS TCHERNISHEVSKY

(*See p.* 131)

CHAPTER TEN

THE WONDERFUL BUDDHIST MONK

AND

WAYS TO "SHADAI-ADONAI"

CHAPTER TEN

THE WONDERFUL BUDDHIST MONK, AND WAYS TO "SHADAI-ADONAI"

"BROTHER JAAKOFF,

"I recommend to you most heartily our brother in spirit, Looloosakiewachi-Ho, an aboriginal of the South Sea Islands, but now . . . well, I really don't know exactly what to call him, but perhaps a 'Buddhist Monk' would be the most suitable definition of the man and his mission.

"His is a wonderful personality and experience, as I believe he has wandered three times round the globe, his journeys on land being mostly made on foot. He has just come to us from India across the Pamirs and the Caucasus, and his couple of days' stay here with the brethren, I am sure, will remain a lasting blessing for all of us. He has been in Russia before, speaks our language remarkably well, and he is most eager to visit you and the brethren in Odessa. May his visit bring to you all inspiration, light, freedom and love.

"With blessings and greetings to all brethren,

"Fraternally thine,

"STEPAN BOCHARENKO.

"*Astrakhan, April* 25, 1884."

The above message I found one day in May 1884, on returning home from my duties at the Second Government Primary School for Jewish Children, Pushkinskaia Street, Odessa, where I was at the time assistant head-master.

The *dvornik* (house-porter), with whom I always left the keys of my rooms when out, told me that a strange-looking gentleman called, and on being informed that I am usually at home at five o'clock in the afternoon, left the above letter and said he would call again the same day at that hour.

Now, one does not meet aborigines of the South Sea Islands, or hear names like Looloosakiewachi-Ho, every day. Add to this the fact that about a year previously I had started the study of the life and teaching of Prince Sakia Muni, the great and holy founder of Buddhism, that I became deeply engrossed in this study, and filled with reverence and admiration for the transcendental philosophy and moral doctrines of this, to my mind, world's greatest sage and seer, and that, furthermore, I resolved to begin to learn Sanscrit at the earliest opportunity, and was simply longing to make a pilgrimage to India and see Buddhists in the flesh —and you will readily understand my great delight at this unexpected message, and how impatiently I awaited the hour of the call of my most welcome visitor.

However, it was not merely an ordinary student's

zeal in meeting a master that made me so eager to welcome at once the "Buddhist Monk." My whole position at the time, as founder and leader of the "New Israel" movement in Russia since 1881, my vast correspondence with inquirers and sympathizers in various countries, and generally the vicissitudes of the propaganda work in Russia—all these circumstances made me and my friends particularly sensitive to and appreciative of visits by sympathetic foreigners, who would usually bring us encouragement and hope, as well as practical useful information and counsel, at the same time carrying away tidings about us into the wide, wide world.

As I have already fully told the story of "New Israel" in my book *Under the Czar and Queen Victoria. The Experiences of a Russian Reformer*,[1] in which book I related my struggles with the authorities, and how finally I felt myself compelled to give up my most cherished labours and leave Russia for the freer shores of England, I need not enlarge here on this subject again. Suffice it to say that at that time, even far more than now, the Czar's Government kept the strictest watch over all spiritual movements amongst the people, and thousands of Dissenters from the Established Church and others suffered imprisonment, exile, and frequently even death for conscience' sake.

In our case, however, the Government took up a

[1] James Nisbet & Co.

tolerant, even a favourable, attitude, because the movement originated and spread at the time amongst Jews only, and was directed against the deadening ritual of the Orthodox Synagogue. We were thus allowed to exist, and to hold semi-public meetings confined to Jews only, the police paying these meetings occasional visits in the capacity "of private interested individuals," but we all understood well enough the courteous language of the police, and appreciated it accordingly.

Naturally enough, at these semi-public meetings known to the police we were not at our ease, could not receive Christian or other non-Jewish friends, and had generally to be very cautious in what we said and preached. However, as we were eager to pour out our souls without hindrance and have intercourse with friends of other creeds, we had to resort to quite secret meetings, even at the risk of being found out by the authorities, as, indeed, was eventually the case.

In the present case of the arrival of such an extraordinary visitor as a Buddhist Monk, I at once perceived that it would not do to receive him openly at our ordinary meetings, not knowing what he might say and what would be the attitude of the police towards his very appearance amongst us. Thus, before even I beheld him in the flesh, I made up my mind to keep his visit quite secret, if possible, to receive him and give him a hearing only amongst

trusted friends, when we should all be at our ease and could engage in free discussion to our hearts' desire.

Fortunately, Odessa is a cosmopolitan city, and types of various Eastern and Southern races are seen frequently in its streets, so I felt that our visitor would scarcely of himself attract the special attention of the police.

In the midst of wandering thoughts about the police, India, Buddhism, the new visitor, etc., the door bell rang, and in a few moments I beheld the Buddhist Monk.

A striking personality he was, sure enough, but I was a little disappointed in seeing him wear ordinary European dress, as I had conjured up an image of him in his native costume or in that of his religious order. He stretched out to me both his hands, and agreeably surprised me by pronouncing his greeting in Hebrew—

"Shalom l'kho okhi v'rai."

("Peace be to you, brother and friend.")

I naturally replied in the same language, appropriately quoting the well-known verse—

"Barukh atoh b'vaekho, oobarukh atoh bzeisekho."

("Blessed be thou in coming in, and blessed be thou in going out.")

For a few moments I purposely kept him standing, as I was anxious to take in the full impression

of his physical features. He at once struck me as a fine specimen of the Maori type of New Zealand, such as I had only seen in pictures and read descriptions of. Tall and of powerful frame, with flat broad face of a tawny colour, short broad nose, broad low forehead, projecting upper jaws, and with coarse grey-white hair and beard, he would have altogether produced the impression of a wild, uncouth child of nature, were it not for a peculiar kindly light that lit up his whole countenance, especially his eyes, also for his cultured voice, soft and incisive, at the same time with a deep musical undertone. It was difficult to define his age, but though certainly an advanced one, there was vigour and energy in his whole figure and bearing. As I already knew the character of the man from my friend's letter, it seemed to me at first sight that there was something very incongruous between the inner nature of the monk and his outward bizarre, indeed barbarous, appearance. Several friends, however, afterwards told me that on them, on the contrary, his personality at once produced a most pleasing impression, by its quiet, simple dignity and the thoughtful, sympathetic expression of his whole countenance. Anyhow, it took me some little time before I could assimilate the outwardly weird personality of my new friend, but then the longer our conversation lasted, the more did my conviction grow that I was privileged to entertain a savant and

extraordinary linguist, an Eastern sage and prophet, an advanced thinker and teacher with a mission to all nations; indeed, a saint without a country or a Church to worship him, but whose very life's career, unparalleled, as I believe, in the history of all seekers of truth, should be an inspiration and a guiding star to all existing Churches, which claim that they, and they alone, are the bearers of God's message to man and the sole possessors of the absolute divine truth and of the ways of salvation.

As he could stay with us only a few days, I sent word at once to a friend, in whose house our secret meetings were usually held, to be ready for a meeting in the evening next day, and to inform of its special urgency as many brethren as possible. Fortunately everything went off smoothly, and when our brother and teacher from the South Sea Islands left Odessa, we all felt that a brilliant meteor had suddenly crossed our spiritual horizon, but, unlike the natural phenomenon, had left behind it a trail of light that will never go out, but will ever continue to kindle a divine fire in human souls.

Without entering into details of debates and various incidents that took place in our little community during this never-to-be-forgotten visit, I now reproduce here in his own words the wonderful story of this wonderful monk to which we were treated the next evening.

Was it his actual unvarnished experience without

any "literary embellishment"? Or was it, perhaps, his poetic way of preaching his doctrine of love and toleration, like Solomon, Jesus, Buddha himself, and others who spoke to the people in immortal parables?

I, for one, did not, and do not, care which way it was. For, paradoxical as it may seem, there are truths which remain such even when seemingly false, truths which lose none of their intrinsic value even when proclaimed in unreal images. Furthermore, there are things which, as the Evangelist Luke says, "are hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes."

And why should not his narrative be absolutely true in every detail? There is not a single impossible or even improbable incident in it, and its very simplicity is the seal of its veracity.

So he who has ears to hear, let him hear.

The Story of Looloosakiewachi-Ho, as told by Himself

"Brothers and Sisters in the Spirit, and seekers of the Divine Truth! I am an unknown stranger to you, but you are no strangers to me. In a far-away land, across oceans and mountain-chains, it was my good fortune to get hold of an account, in which I read particulars about your community, how you are struggling to find the way from darkness to

light amidst doubts and difficulties within your own souls, and still more amidst difficulties and trials imposed by the powers of darkness without. I then felt that the same Divine Spirit animates us all, the same human heart throbs in you and me, no matter how different our origin, colour and maternal tongue. I have come, therefore, to learn all about you, to get inspiration from you, as well as to tell you my own experience of the way from darkness to light through which I passed myself.

"Undoubtedly we are all united in the very desire of approaching, attaining and realizing the highest ideal of truth and righteousness, of discovering the true destiny of man in the world, and of fulfilling the mission of this our ephemeral existence. But undoubtedly, too, we differ in many points as to what this destiny, this mission, of ours is, and what ways lead best to the ideal of holiness. As we shall have dicussions on various points, I think it might be useful, first of all, to explain in what spirit discussions generally should be conducted. Now, in every debate one does his best to defeat his opponent, and glories in coming out victorious, having proved himself to be in the right. This is not the case with me. Though I have formed my own firm convictions on the questions which interest us all, I shall equally glory in being defeated by you—that is, in being made to understand that I am mistaken and in the wrong. For if I am triumphant,

and make you acknowledge the truth I hold to be the right one and your own truth to be false, I shall leave this room unimproved myself, unenlightened, my spiritual treasures will remain unaltered and the same, my ideas not enlarged and enriched by new and better ones. It is you who will have learned something new, something which you did not know before. You will carry away a new light, and leave this room better men and women.

"You, the defeated ones, will in reality be benefited by a better knowledge of things; I, triumphing, shall only be helpful to you, but not be helped myself. Now, on the contrary, if *you* are triumphant and prove to me my mistakes and errors, it will be I alone who will benefit by the new knowledge, for I shall learn the falsity of my former ways, my spiritual treasures will become increased, I shall become a better man, having benefited by your experience and knowledge, whilst you yourselves will remain unaltered, unhelped, except inasmuch as you helped me. Thus I believe that in every debate in which both sides are earnestly and sincerely seeking nothing but the truth the real winner is he who is outwardly defeated, inasmuch as his ignorance and darkness have been dispersed, and light thrown on the path of his future life and activity. If I am victorious over you, I shall myself learn nothing or very little; if I am defeated, I shall learn much. The pupil should feel more thankful

for being taught than the master for teaching, for the former receives, whilst the latter gives.

"There is also another important point to be taken into consideration in every debate, namely, that it is quite possible and logical, and *de facto* true, that two opponents, discussing the same subject and holding opposite views of it, should both be perfectly right at the same time. For instance, place an Eskimo of the Arctic region and a Negro of equatorial Africa in the same moderate temperature, and they are sure to disagree totally in their appreciation of it. The Eskimo would find it too warm, whilst the Negro would feel too cold in it. And would they not both be quite right and express their real feelings? And what arguments of a man of a temperate zone would avail to make them understand that they are both mistaken in their feelings, since these feelings are real and the natural outcome of their own inner constitutions and temperaments, brought about by the difference of their natural surroundings and conditions of life?

"Similarly, the eagle can admire the running of the ostrich, but not his flying, whilst the reindeer may envy his flying, but not his running—and both are quite right in their appreciations.

"It is just the same in the spiritual world of our ideas, which differ, and must of necessity differ, because our very bodies and minds differ in their sensitiveness and power of observation, assimilation,

analysis, deduction, comparison and construction. And in wishing to convey to you my own ideas, I am far from thinking that they all should, or could, become your own. I only believe that the very narrative of the process of my psychological development may be useful to you, that in the garden of a soul nurtured in a different clime and under different conditions you may find some flowers worthy of cultivating in your own garden.

"So let me tell you the simple experience of my life, which has been varied, rich, and perhaps unique, but I can give you just now only a brief outline of it, trusting that you may find it interesting and instructive.

* * * * * *

"I first saw the light of day on a far-away lonely island in the South Sea. My parents lived in a cave, and walked about practically naked, like the few other inhabitants of the same island. Agriculture was unknown amongst us. We lived upon fruit and roots, or by fishing and hunting; our weapons consisted of bows and arrows made of wood or bone. At sunrise all the tribepeople prostrated themselves on the ground, uttering a kind of greeting or prayer. At the appearance of the new moon they joined in a wild midnight dance. Our dead were buried with a supply of food, renewed at certain intervals. When a mountain on a neighbouring island began

to spit fire and ashes, the ground under our own feet trembling and shaking, we used to assemble before the highest rock, and there slay an infant, scattering his bones and flesh, and sprinkling his blood in all directions.

"We believed in good and evil spirits inhabiting the earth, the ocean and the heavens, and one day, when I was about six years old, our people were struck with consternation by the appearance of a vision on the horizon.

"With white wings, like those of a gigantic bird, it was borne by the wind straight upon our shores, and as it approached quite near we all prostrated ourselves on the ground, praying for mercy. The vision proved to be nothing more than a small boat with its white sails, and in it lay three men, two of whom were dead, whilst the third showed signs of life. We took him on shore, and gradually he recovered, but we could not understand his speech. His colour was white, his beard and hair grey, and we looked on him as on a good spirit from heaven, bringing him the best food we had, and showing him signs of adoration. As he got by and by to understand our tongue, he began to help us in many ways, and teach us to do things we never knew before. Indeed, he became our chief, our tribe being attached to him with the devotion of a faithful dog, and joyfully executing all his orders. I must have shown some special intelligence, for from

amongst all the other children he chose me as his constant servant and companion. He began to teach me his own language, showing by signs the meaning of his words. He pointed to heaven, and made me pronounce 'Shomaim'; to the earth, and I had to say 'Aretz.' When the wind blew he made me say 'Ruakh'; the rain he called 'Geshem'; the lightning 'Khaziz.' He looked at the sun and said 'Shemesh'; at the moon, 'Joreakh'; at the stars, 'Kokhevim.' Thus it was not difficult for him, in the course of time, to acquaint me in his own language not only with natural phenomena, but also with some spiritual ideas, and as I was not slow to assimilate his teaching, he soon made me draw signs on leaves, wood or stone that corresponded to the words I knew by hearsay. You guess, of course, that the man was a Hebrew, and a prophet too, I must add, for he lived amongst us as a saint, and all he foretold came to be true.

"I was about twelve years old when our chief and my own beloved teacher began to feel weak and that his last day was approaching. He then called me and told me many new things.

"His own native place, he said, lay near the Promised Land of his ancestors, between two great rivers called Tigris and Euphrates. He was shipwrecked whilst on a voyage to see the glories of God's world. There are many other lands and many different races and nations.

"They all feel the presence of Shadai-Adonai, the Lord Omnipotent, Creator of the Universe, and their soul panteth to be in constant communion with Him.

"They are cursed when cast away from His sight, and blessed when in His presence. They worship Him in various images and forms, and seek to find Him in different ways. But He is always the same under all human disguises. His voice is heard in the wind and storm, in the thunder rolling across the skies, and in the songs of birds and the rippling of the waters. His face is seen in the sun by day, and in the heavenly host by night. He painteth the rainbow in the clouds, and the flowers in field and wood. He planteth hope in the aching heart, and gives wings to our spirit to rise and search the past and the future. The whole creation praiseth His glory, all are in Him, and He in all. He is One everlastingly, and His name is Shadai-Adonai, the Lord Omnipotent.

"The old man repeated to me these and other things again and again, until his words became engraved on my heart. One day, feeling that he was getting weaker, he put his hands upon my head and said, 'The Spirit of Shadai-Adonai has now descended upon thee; thou wilt leave the place of thy birth, visit many lands and nations, learn how they seek to find and commune with the Creator, and teach them that He who exists is only One,

from whom all beings come, and to whom all beings return.'

"The holy man soon departed, but his spirit continued to commune with mine in the visions of the day and night. I felt that a change had come over me, and that something extraordinary awaited me in the future.

"The prophecy that I should leave the place of my birth became realized sooner than I expected. A few weeks after the death of the old man a vessel anchored at our shores, and several of our people were taken away to be sold as slaves, I being amongst them.

"The first evening our captors assembled on the deck of the vessel, placed themselves in a row, put their thumbs under the lobes of their ears, and remained silent and immovable for several minutes. Then they made numerous prostrations, after which they remained standing and silent, whilst one of them commenced a chant, to which the others made frequent responses. Then prostrations were repeated, after which they dispersed for their night's rest, some returning to their duties. As I looked on this strange performance, a thought suddenly flashed through my mind: 'This is the way these people seek to find and commune with their Creator, Shadai-Adonai.'

"So the next evening when the religious service commenced again, I joined the row of worship-

pers, put my thumbs to my ears, and tried to do everything as they did. And, behold, I felt that Shadai-Adonai was near me, and I was in His presence.

"Thus I learned the first religious lesson of my new life, and I afterwards found that this simple form of worship is one of those in frequent use by Mohammedans.

"Our vessel next stopped and anchored at another island, and whilst there I witnessed a procession of people marching round a heap of stones glowing red from the fire burning beneath them. The leader bowed and chanted, his followers shouting, and making various signs with their arms. Then they stopped for a minute or so, after which they walked with bare feet over the burning mass, shouting in wild enthusiasm until they were on the other side, some falling helplessly to the ground badly burnt, whilst others seemed to have passed the ordeal unhurt.

"This was the well-known sect of 'Fire-Walkers,' and as I at the time witnessed their ceremony, the same thought struck me again that these people are communing with Shadai-Adonai, feeling His presence in their hearts.

"Next our vessel landed at another island, which I now know to have been Ceylon. Here a medley of strange people of various colours and appearance met us on the shore, and I managed to slip away

from our crew unnoticed, and returned to the vessel no more.

"Thus I was left to my own resources in a new land. I noticed people wandering about, begging and receiving food, and when hunger began to torment me I did the same.

"Shortly, I saw women with flowers in their hands marching in procession. Following them, I arrived at a strange building, inside which were images carved in stone and bone, some with gilded heads, before which the women laid down their flowers, after which some ceremonies were gone through. It was a Buddhist temple, and though I could not understand the meaning of all I saw, a reverent feeling took hold of me, and I joined silently in the worship, for the thought again occurred to me that these people are communing with Shadai-Adonai, and feel His presence in their hearts.

"Seeing me abandoned and helpless, an old man took pity on me, and with him I went to a wood where, in huts covered only with leaves, a number of men lived. A little farther away, in a rocky hill, several large and small rooms were hewn at the end of a long and narrow passage. Here I saw a number of books and parchments with peculiar signs drawn and painted in black and in colours, and among them was a roll in which I at once recognized Hebrew characters, as taught to me by my old teacher. This singular retreat was a Buddhist

monastery, and my benefactor was one of the monks.

"Here I remained several years, and was taught Sanscrit and Hindu, being initiated into the Holy Writ of the Vedas, the Law of Manu, and other great books. I gathered that there is only one Soul which animates the whole creation, that plants and beasts, even the venomous reptiles, are made of the same stuff as ourselves, and have the same spirit of life in them; that we live in them and they in us; that we all alike come from and return to the same source of everything which exists.

"The images of stone, bone, and gold became now intelligible to me, for they are all but tangible incarnations of intangible ideas and sentiments, outward signs of the longing of the human heart for communion with Shadai-Adonai, the Lord Omnipotent and Omnipresent, the Eternal Spirit pervading the whole creation.

"Some of the Buddhist monks wandered far away, preaching the word of salvation in remote towns and villages. One of them I joined, visiting with him many regions and witnessing strange sights.

"I saw men who held their arm upraised for many years until it became stiffened and dried, so that it could no longer be bent. They did so in fulfilment of a vow made to their god to obtain forgiveness of sins. I saw a young widow throwing herself, with

mirthful hymns, into burning flames, to join her departed beloved one in a world where there is no more separation and suffering. We came across immense crowds of people accompanying their sacred Juggernaut, and we saw many joyfully meeting their death under his wheels, envied by thousands of spectators. I saw others, in the simplicity of their hearts, communing with their Creator by turning the prayer wheel on the high road; and I witnessed the orgies of the Devil-worshipping Yesidis in their underground temple with its corpses of the 'Seven Sleepers,' as they brought their human sacrifices to the Angel Resiel, the Satanic author of their holy writ, the 'Mashafe Rashe.' But who can enumerate all the varied forms in which the human soul wrestles with the flesh when in the awful presence of the Eternal, yearning for salvation from the dread doom of death and destruction!

"In all these forms of religious worship, crude, incomprehensible, sometimes gruesome, sometimes sublime, I could only see one feature common to them all: a burning desire to find God, to please Him, to connect this passing life of ours with the life everlasting, to suppress the animal instinct in man, and to bring out the divine elements of his nature.

"By this time I had heard and read much of the great white races inhabiting Europe, of their wonderful science and inventions, and their conquests

over Nature herself. One day I said to myself, 'I must visit them, and learn their way of seeking communion with Shadai-Adonai.'

"Thus I started on a journey to Christian, Jewish, and Mohammedan Europe, making up my mind to remain in the most important countries a sufficient time to learn the predominant languages, so as to be able to study their Holy Writ and understand the various modes of their worship. Ask me not what means I had for the support of my material existence; I had none, but I had faith that everywhere there exist good people, of whatever creed or nationality, ready to feed and give shelter to the wandering pilgrim seeking the way to holiness and salvation. It was a wonder to many in Christian lands that a missionary should go out from the East to the West, but firstly I came to learn myself rather than to teach; and secondly, Christians are apt to forget that their faith in Europe has come from prophets and apostles of the East.

"I was longing, first of all, to visit a synagogue of the Jews, to learn the ways of worship of the brothers of my first teacher of blessed memory. As I entered their house of prayer, I saw in the centre of the eastern wall a shrine ornamented with figures of animals and carvings of different designs and colours. Before the shrine, to the right, there stood a desk with burning candles on it, the light of which was quite unnecessary, and shone but dimly

in the full light of the day. In the centre of the house there was an elevated platform with a table on it, whilst the ceiling was painted with the figures of the Zodiac, the whole encircled by a gigantic fish holding its tail in its mouth, the monster apparently representing the Leviathan. On the walls there were inscriptions in huge Hebrew letters of various texts, the whole interior presenting a quaint sight which I had never witnessed before. But you no doubt know even better than I do the interior aspect of an old-fashioned Orthodox synagogue. Men came in—men only, as you know—and began to cover themselves with the white woollen sheet—the holy Talith. Then they tied a small black leather cube on their foreheads, and another on their left arms, proceeding then to wind around the arm and hand a long leather band in specific fashion, muttering prayers during the whole process. They now all began to chant, suddenly stopping immovable and silent for several minutes, after which one after another, some simultaneously, made several steps backwards, then returned to their places, and, chanting, commenced again, now by the whole congregation, now by the reader or cantor alone. You, of course, know that it was but an ordinary public service, performed every morning in the synagogue, with its 'Shmonoh Esreh,' or eighteen particular parts, which must be performed in silence and motionless, with the obligatory spitting towards the conclusion of the

service, as a sign of supreme contempt for the idols of the heathen, etc., etc.

"As I stood and looked on amazed at all these performances, again the old voice said within me, 'This is the way the Jews seek to commune with Shadai-Adonai, feeling His presence in their hearts.'

"Then my soul, too, panted to commune with my Creator, and I tried as much as I could to do what the congregation did in the synagogue, keeping my hat on my head and concentrating my thought prayerfully until the service was over.

"Next I visited for the first time a Russian Orthodox church. I need not describe to you the ordinary interior aspect of such a church, nor the vestments of the clergy, nor their ceremonies and rites. Then I mingled with and attended the services of numerous dissenting sects, beginning from the Old Rascolniks and the Evangelical communities of the Stundists, Molocans, and Doukhobortsi, and finishing with the Byeguni, those men and women of iron will and unbending purpose, with their belief in the present reign of the anti-Christ, who find strength enough to conquer nature's first instinct, burying themselves alive in the name of Christ their loving God to escape the polluted air of a sinful world. After all I had witnessed before in other climes, I learned no longer to be astonished at anything, but to see everywhere manifested the same Spirit of Shadai-Adonai, which now

sends the sun, rain and warmth to refresh and build up anew the earth and everything on it, and now sends storm, flood and earthquake to destroy the beautiful products of nature or man.

"If I once began describing to you my experiences in Western Europe and in America, amongst the endless branches of Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and Schools of Free Thought, I should certainly never be able to finish, or would give you but too meagre an idea of the ways to Shadai-Adonai chosen and followed by the more civilized races of mankind. For I had the honour of shaking hands with and receiving the blessing of His Holiness the Pope of Rome; I sat prayerfully silent with the Quakers, and joined joyfully in the hallelujahs of the Salvationists to the strains of tambourines, drums, and brass instruments. The Shakers of the eastern states of America count me amongst their friends, as I do them, and the Mormons of the Salt Lake City asked me to prolong my visit to them or settle amongst them altogether. I took part in the service of the Church of Humanity, or the Positivists, and spoke to attentive and appreciative audiences from the platforms of Free Thinkers, Secularists, and Socialists. Always and everywhere, wherever men congregated in the name of God or in that of the Ideal of Humanity, I saw the innate effort of the finite human being to commune and identify himself with the Infinite Source of all

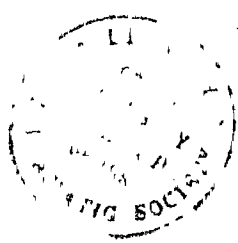
existence, with the Creator of the Universe, the Lord Omnipotent and Omnipresent, who is invoked by so many names, represented in images so many and various, but who is everlastingly the same, the Cause of all Causes, the End of all Ends. His Spirit moves in us all; it is only our ways of communing with Him that differ so widely. Very frequently these ways are hard, misleading, crooked, perhaps unprofitable and even dangerous. But can we condemn to everlasting doom those unable to find better ways! Is the short-sighted one responsible for being short-sighted, the lame man for not being able to run at a quicker pace, or the sparrow for not possessing the voice of a nightingale, the early morning sun for shining less brilliantly than at noon, or, finally, the child for not having the experience of a grown-up man?

"Brothers and Sisters in the Spirit of Shadai-Adonai! I have put before you simply the varied experience of my long life, and the conclusions forced upon me by observation, study and logical deduction, namely, that the way of salvation is open to all—Heathen, Jew, Christian, or Mohammedan. If their ways of seeking God differ, their end is always one and the same—holiness, purity, justice, love and everlasting life, those spiritual gifts granted to each one in the measure in which he is able to receive them. Let us, then, not look on one another as hostile strangers worshipping different

gods, but, on the contrary, let us learn in a spirit of love and brotherhood each other's ways, the strong helping the weak, the older guiding the younger, the wiser looking with forbearance on those grappling with darkness and ignorance. Christians, go to the synagogue and worship there with the Jews; Jews, go and pray with the followers of Christ; both go and join in reverent spirit the Mohammedans while they are invoking and communing with the Creator, and let all go to learn the ways of the Heathen as he is seeking his God and salvation.

"For He who exists is only One: from Him all beings come, and to Him all beings return. No mortal can penetrate into His everlasting mystery, but all long for a knowledge of His inscrutable nature, and the Hebrews call Him: Shadai-Adonai, the Lord Omnipotent."

THE END



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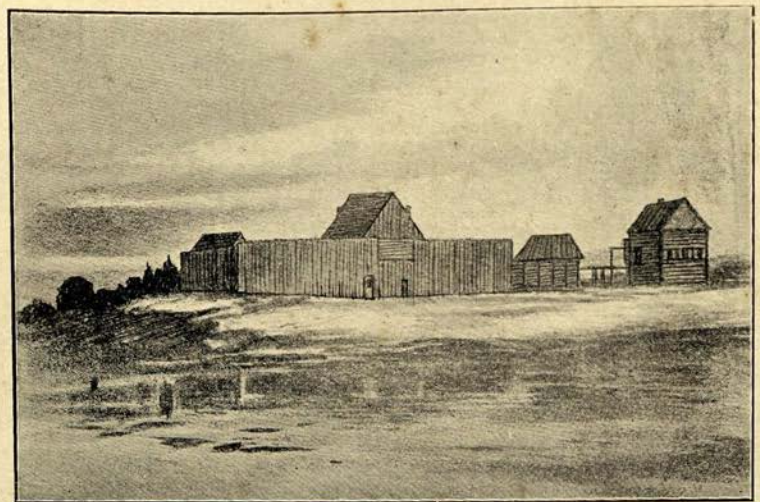

[*To face p.* 310

VILLUISK PRISON, NORTH-EASTERN SIBERIA, IN WHICH N. G. TCHERNISHEVSKY WAS CONFINED ABOUT TWENTY YEARS

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